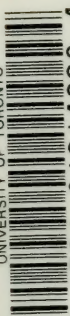


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A
HISTORY OF ENGLAND
UNDER THE
ANGLO-SAXON KINGS.

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THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND

LONDON

JOHN BAYNE





HISTORY OF ENGLAND

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ANGLO-SAXON KINGS

Translated from the German of

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FORMERLY KEEPER OF THE ARCHIVES OF THE CITY OF HAMBURG,

BY THE LATE

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INSTITUTES OF ENGLAND,' ETC.

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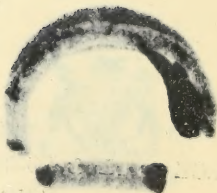
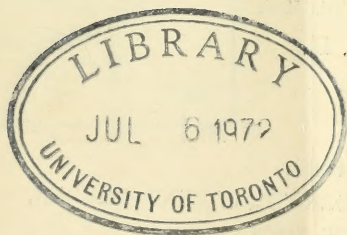
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Ecgherht—Peace with Mercia—Witena-gemot at Winchester—England—Peace—Alliance with Charles the Great—War with Mercia—Its Subjection—Landing of Northmen—Victory at Hengestes-Dûn—Subjection of North Wales—Glory and Importance of this Reign—The Danes or Northmen—Their History and Language—Sagas—Alliances.

IF Charles the Great ever entertained the thought of extending his dominion across the Channel by a marriage with Eadburh, the relict of the West Saxon Beorhtric, it must have been but transient. Faithful friends and allies, such as he had found in Mercia, Northumbria and Wessex, would undoubtedly appear to him more useful against the British states and the Northern pirates than ill-disposed subjects, who, in alliance with those powers, as well as with the continental Saxons, might have risen and made common

cause against him. Hence it does not appear that he manifested any opposition, when Ecgberht,—who, after his expulsion from England, had spent thirteen years in the Frankish dominions,¹ where he had acquired skill in arms as well as other princely accomplishments,—took possession of the vacant throne in compliance with the invitation of his friends.² A victory gained by his countrymen signalized the day of his accession. A body of Mercians from the territory of the Hwiccas, under their ealdorman Æthelmund, had crossed the Isis at Cynemaresford (Kempsford), where they were encountered by the ealdorman Weohstan and the men of Wiltshire. Both leaders fell in the conflict, but the men of Wiltshire gained the victory. Soon after, a peace was confirmed by the oaths of the noblest men of Ecgberht and of the Mercian king Cenwulf.³

The first memorable act of Ecgberht seems to have been to bestow in a witena-gemot held at Winchester, and with the consent of his people, the name of ENGLAND⁴ on the dominions over which his influence prevailed.

¹ See Sax. Chron., Fl. W., H. Hunt., who all assign a duration of three years only to the exile of Ecgberht, but which appears to have taken place immediately on the marriage of Beorhtric with the daughter of Offa in 787. By the same authorities we are even told that Offa (who died in 794) was instrumental in his expulsion. The probability seems to be, that a clerical error in the Saxon Chronicle of iii. for xiii. has been servilely copied by the Latin chroniclers. Malmesbury (lib. ii. 1), who is more circumstantial than the others respecting the early years of Ecgberht, makes no mention of the three years.

² Sax. Chron. Asser, a 800. W. Malm. ii. 1. “Est enim gens illa (Francorum scil.) et exercitatione virium et comitate morum cunctarum Occidentalium facile princeps.”

³ See document in Heming, Chart. p. 453, Mon. Angl. t. i. p. 592 [and Cod. Diplom. t. i. p. 213, where the charter (dated in 799) is justly marked as spurious, as well as one of Beorhtric, dated in 801.—T.].

⁴ A.D. DCCC. “Egbertus rex totius Britanniae, in parlamento

For a considerable length of time the preponderance of the northern kingdoms had caused the name of the Angles to be considered as the predominant collective appellation of the Germanic population of the island;¹ and, when joined with that of the Saxons, it always formed the first part of the compound.² Even in cases relating exclusively to the Saxon race, as in the laws of the West Saxon Ine,³ we find them denominated Englisemen. The Britons and the Gael continued, however, to give to their neighbours the name of Saxons under which they first became known to them, yet that appellation was objectionable, as it might easily be confounded by foreign nations with that of the Old-Saxons—who, through their wars with Charles the Great and their subsequent conversion, had at that time become of importance to the state, the church, and to general intercourse among nations—while that of the Angles, almost forgotten on the continent, distinctly and not unhistorically designated the island people. If, therefore, a name was to be bestowed on the island suitable to the greater portion of its inhabitants, one derived from the Angles was undoubtedly the most fitting. Nothing speaks more strongly in favour of the preceding account, than that the name of Anglia is nowhere to be found before the reign of Ecgberht, though it appears shortly after his time.⁴ The occasion

apud Wintoniam, mutavit nomen regni de consensu populi sui, et jussit illud de cætero vocari Angliam." *Hist. Foundationis Hospit. S. Leonardi*, in *Mon. Angl.* vol. vi. p. 608. Cf. *Caradoc*, p. 26.

¹ Bedæ H. E. Præf. Bonifaci Epist.

² The compound word 'Anglo-Saxons' occurs first in Paul Warnefrid, lib. vi. c. 15, "Cedoaldus rex Anglorum Saxonum;" consequently before the time of Ecgberht. ³ *Inæ Leges* xxiv.

⁴ The earliest mention that I have met with of the name of Anglia is in a charter of Wiglaf of Mercia, dated in 833, on the

of this change is more difficult to be conceived, as no royal title was at that time denominated from the country, but from the race of the subjects.¹ This account has generally been rejected by historians, by whom it has been understood as if Ecgberht had bestowed the name of England only on his kingdom of Wessex, a supposition easily refuted by records both of Ecgberht and of later times. It was manifestly applied to the whole Germanic part of the island, which had been previously united only by the political institution of the Bretwaldaship. The abolition of this title, of which no further mention occurs, and the introduction of that of sovereign of England, appears therefore to have been the work of Ecgberht. Occasion to this change, so entirely unconnected with the essential interests and rights of the people, and on that account probably unnoticed by the ancient chroniclers, may have been given by Charles the Great, who had just established his sovereignty over the Bretons in France, adopted the imperial title, and jealously striven to remove everything which, even through an unsought-for ambiguity, might, seem to endanger the rights of himself or his successors.

The first years of Ecgberht's reign were passed in happy tranquillity, of which he well availed himself

day of S. Augustine, and signed in the presence of Ecgberht: "*coram pontificibus et proceribus majoribus totius Angliæ.*" See Cod. Diplom. t. i. p. 301. In authors I have remarked the name first in the Annal. Xanten. a. 730, the older part of which was compiled in the year 852.

¹ In a charter dated, *regni sui anno xxxviii. (795)*, Offa of Mercia also styles himself "*rex Anglorum.*" In Evident. Eccles. Cant. ap. Twysden 2219, and Cod. Diplom. i. p. 191, this charter is dated in the year 790.

for the consolidation of his power. Even the Britons, warned probably by the fate of their brethren on the other side of the Channel, appear to have ceased from warring with the Saxons during a space of twenty years, before and at the beginning of the reign of Ecgberht. Not unconnected, perhaps, with the revolt of the Armoricans, in the year 809, against Charles, during his absence in Saxony, it happened, that from that year a series of wars ensued with Cornwall¹ and the other Welsh states, which, for Ecgberht and his warriors, proved both glorious for the moment, and an instructive school for more formidable contests. A general revolt of the Britons on both sides of the Channel against their Germanic oppressors may at this time have been planned, or the object of Ecgberht may have been to prevent by a diversion the insular Britons from sending succour to their continental kinsmen. Cornwall now became united with Wessex; the other South Britons acknowledged themselves tributary to Ecgberht; the refractory Welsh were unmercifully visited with fire and sword; and the episcopal see of St. David's was laid in ashes.² The bonds of the conquered provinces were, nevertheless, far from firmly riveted, for in the year 823 the Cornish Britons fought a great battle with the people of Devonshire (*Defn-sætas*) at Gafulford,³ and so little were the Anglo-Saxons able to spread themselves beyond the Tamar, that this river for some centuries continued to form

¹ W. Malm. lib. ii. 1. Matt. Westm. a. 809.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 813. Annal. Camb. a. 810. W. Malm. Matt. Westm. aa. 810, 811. Caradoc, p. 21. Respecting the continental Bretons, see Schubert's *Duru*, t. i. p. 56. Eginh. Annal. a. 811.

³ Sax. Chron. Ethelw. iii. 2. Fl. W. a. 823. Caradoc, p. 25.

one of the most remarkable boundaries between two nations and two languages in all Europe.

Ecgberht had possessed the throne nearly a quarter of a century. In the west his kingdom was fully secured against his humbled hereditary enemies, while his powerful friend, Charles the Great, was withdrawn from earthly fellowship,—to shine, more brightly reflected in the mirror of memory and history, an unrivalled model to future rulers,—when he deliberately and boldly seized the moment, in which the power of the hitherto predominant state of Mercia was enfeebled by anarchy caused by the usurper Beornwulf and his kindred, to destroy the assumed supremacy of that kingdom over the other southern Anglo-Saxon states. The opportunity of engaging in a struggle for the chief power in England was supplied by the East Angles, who, with their king, whose name is unknown to us, sent ambassadors to Ecgberht, imploring his protection and succour against the hostility and tyranny of the Mercians. The beginning of the wars seems, however, to have been unfavourable to Ecgberht, the Mercians having penetrated as far as the territory of the Wilsætas; but the bloody victory at Ellandûn,¹ though purchased with the loss of Hun, the ealdorman of the Sumorsætas,² and many other valiant leaders, proved decisive for the dragon of Wessex. The victor now followed up his

¹ Sax. Chron. Ethelw. Fl. W. a. 823. "In Ellandune, id est in Monte Eallæ." H. Hunt., evidently quoting an old poem, says, "Ellendune rivus cruore rubuit, ruina restitit, factore labuit." According to the lines in Robert of Brunne, Beornwulf fell in the battle:

Ellendoune, Ellendoune, þi lond is full rede
Of þe blode of Bernewolf, þer he toke his dede.

² Ethelwerd. iii. 2.

long-cherished plans. The southern states had by the Mercian princes been withdrawn from the long-established supremacy of Wessex and the government of the mediate kings of the race of Cerdic,¹ such as that in Kent of Eadberht Præn, and Ealhmund, the father of Ecgberht. A like relation to Sussex was of still earlier date, and we have probably in the Sigeberht before mentioned an under-king of the East Saxons of the royal house of Wessex. Suthrice (Surrey) is also mentioned as one of the earlier appanages of the West Saxon kingdom. Ecgberht sent his son Æthelwulf with Ealhstan, the warlike bishop of Sherborne, and the ealdorman Wulfheard into Kent, where they drove the king Baldred northwards over the Thames. Kent, Surrey, Essex and Sussex now submitted to the sovereignty of Ecgberht, who appointed his son Æthelwulf king of Kent, which kingdom, as well as the other smaller states, were from this time generally granted, with the kingly title, to the eldest sons of the West Saxon monarchs.

At this time the great synod was held at Clovesho, after which it appears that Beornwulf led a powerful army against the East Angles, with the design of punishing them for their submission to Ecgberht, and replacing them under the supremacy of Mercia. Beornwulf was defeated and fell in a battle between the two nations. A similar fate attended his kinsman and successor Ludeca,² who, to avenge the death of his predecessor, had invaded the territory of the East Angles.

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. H. Hunt. a. 823.

² Ethelw. a. 825. Beornwulf's death is in the Chronicle and Florence placed under the year 823, while the synod of Clovesho is assigned to 822, instead of 824. See Wilkins, Conc. t. i. p. 175, 6, Smith's Bede, p. 768, where a brother of the king's named Byuna is mentioned, but who did not succeed him on the throne.

He fell with five ealdormen, when the ealdorman Wiglaf,¹ a relation of the royal house of Mercia, was, with the general consent of the nation, called to the vacant throne, from which he was driven by the power of Ecgberht, before he could assemble an army. After various wanderings, he at length, through the friendship of the abbot Siward, found, during four months, a sanctuary in the cell of Æthelthryth,—daughter of Offa and the betrothed of his victim, the young Æthelberht of East Anglia.—until, through the mediation of Siward, he was reconciled with Ecgberht, by whom, on the condition of an annual tribute, he was, after three years passed in exile, restored to his kingdom, under the suzerainty of the West Saxon monarch.² Wiglaf was succeeded by Beorhtwulf, who after a reign of thirteen years was driven beyond sea by the northern pirates.

Having reduced to subjection the whole country to the south of the Humber, Ecgberht turned his arms against the Northumbrians, who, deeming submission the wiser course, met him peaceably at Dore on the northern side of the river, and having given hostages, placed themselves under his authority.³

Ecgberht being now acknowledged as sovereign of all England, which in the north extended far beyond its present limits, was with greater justice than any of the seven kings, who before him had borne the title, acknowledged as the eighth Bretwalda. Wiglaf, as we have seen, was his tributary; Swithræd, the refractory

¹ See Flor. Geneal., where his queen is called Cynethryth.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 828.

³ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 838. Matthew of Westminster, p. 133, is the only writer who on this occasion speaks of great devastations in Northumbria.

king of Essex, was subdued and expelled, when the country of the East Saxons, ceasing to exist as a separate kingdom, became a part of the state assigned to the West Saxon crown-princes.

Ecgberht also directed his victorious army against the North Welsh, who were unable to offer any effectual resistance. He devastated the country as far as Snowdon, entered the territory of Roweynauc in Denbighshire,¹ and thence penetrated to Mona,² not deeming the conquest of the country complete until he had reduced that isle to subjection. The kings of Cumberland and Strathclyde alone were not comprised in the number of Ecgberht's vassals. For their independence they were apparently indebted to the pacific footing on which they had prudently continued towards their powerful neighbour.

The sovereignty of Ecgberht was of a character widely different from that of the old Bretwaldaship, though in principle immediately based on it, and the change from an elective emperor to a suzerain lord had been prepared by preceding events. Those small states established for, and by circumstances attending conquest, and not yet connected by internal wants and organization, must cease to exist as soon as the sword became rusty, and the mind of the rugged warrior was no longer animated by constant hopes of booty. The influence of the church, though it might gradually dissolve such encampments, could not transform them

¹ *Annal. Cambriæ*, a. 816. Cf. aa. 818, 822 for the conquest of Powis by the Saxons, and *Brut y Tyw*, aa. 816, 818, 822, and *Sax. Chron.* a. 828.

² *Caradoc*, p. 24. *Caradoc's* chronology is extremely faulty; he places this expedition about the year 826, and yet in the time of Cenwulf of Mercia, who died in 819, and whose war with Dimetia is mentioned in *Annal. Camb.* a. 818.

into powerful governments,affording security to religion, peace, and rising industry. Those states, moreover, lost nothing in comparison with what they gained through the centralization of power ; the old races sprung from Wöden were extinct, while nobles and people alike continued in the enjoyment of all their old rights and institutions. But the natural course of things, as history has so frequently shown us, here provided for the people, as well as if they, with all sagacity and foresight, could themselves have guided coming events. While desire of strife and anarchy seemed to contribute only to bring all the other states under subjection to the strongest and most corrupt, the possibility was at the same time acquired of protecting the realm against the more and more dangerous, and at length irresistible attacks of the Danes and Northmen, or to render their expulsion practicable. Through these agencies the leading features of the English character and institutions were so strongly confirmed, that, after a lapse of ten centuries, they have not only preserved themselves, but appear as a chief element in the character of the greater part of the old and of the new world.

Ecgberht had enjoyed his extended sway but a few years,when he received intelligence that Danish pirates had landed and plundered on the Isle of Shephey. In the following year they landed from a fleet of thirty-five ships at Carrum (Charmouth) in Dorsetshire, whither Ecgberht in person having marched to encounter them, was defeated with great loss by those formidable sons of the North. Hereupon Ecgberht immediately summoned his prelates and nobles to assemble at London, for the purpose of adopting measures against the Danish pirates. In a charter of Wiglaf, the tribu-

tary king of Mercia,¹ published at the time, we find the names of the archbishop of York, and of the East Anglian bishops, but not those of their kings, whose delegates they were. The next landing of this barbarous foe was on the coast of Cornwall, where being joined by the British natives, their united forces proceeded to ravage the West Saxon frontier. Ecgberht, now better prepared for the conflict, met them with his forces at Hengestes-dûn (Hengstone), where he defeated them with great slaughter, and put the rest to flight.² But the audacity of the Britons was to be expiated by a severer punishment. Ecgberht took Chester, the metropolis of Gwynedd (Caer Leon ar Dhyfrdwy), and, besides other humiliations imposed on the inhabitants, ordered the brazen statue of their ancient king Cadwallhon to be destroyed, and never to be restored. All the Welsh, with their families, he commanded to quit his kingdom within six months, on pain of death; a measure of mistaken policy, by which they were made to appear more formidable than they in reality could have been, and at a time when the civilization of the Anglo-Saxons could more easily have rendered the nationality of the Welsh harmless, than their arms could annihilate or totally subdue them. The Welsh ascribed this decree to the inveterate hatred entertained towards them by Rædburh, the consort of Ecgberht.³ This is the last act known to us of the fortunate reign of this great prince, who in the following year ended his glorious life.⁴

Ecgberht founded an Anglo-Saxon kingdom such as for extent and power had never previously existed, and which, through unity and internal tranquillity, was

¹ Cod. Dip. t. i. p. 301.

² Sax. Chr. Fl. W. a. 835.

³ Caradoc, p. 27.

⁴ Sax. Chr. a. 836.

essentially favourable both to moral cultivation and the development of national and judicial institutions. His acts were the seed whence sprang the golden fruit which his successors brought to maturity, and the memory of which posterity has been accustomed to combine with the great name of Ælfred. But a grand plan has seldom been realized unaccompanied by the germ of its destruction. Those sons of misery and barbarism, the Danes or Northmen, who for half a century had afflicted by their attacks the several Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, began at this time to excite the attention, and call into activity the full power of the united state, nor did their ravages cease until the annihilation of the Anglo-Saxon sovereignty and the supremacy of the Norman were alike confirmed. The history of the immediate successor of Ecgberht being little else than a struggle with the Northmen, the new race which now entered England calls already for a closer consideration.

The obscurity which shrouds the descent of those formidable freebooters, the ignorance of the cause of their settlements and wanderings from Iceland to Sicily, from Apulia to Ireland, the number, less perhaps of their hordes than of their deeds on the wide theatre of almost the whole of our portion of the globe, of which not only every city on the sea-shore or on the great rivers, with its minsters and churches, but even the smallest inland villages, preserved an appalling remembrance—these, and similar indubitable historic evidences, excite our attention not less than the splendour and beauty for which in later times the Normans have been celebrated. As models of pagan native energy ; as the founders of institutions and legislations yet in vigorous operation ; as the creators and fosterers of a

new poetic culture ; as examples of a triumphant faith rewarded with crowns both of martyrdom and of worldly sway ; in short, as the prototype of that state of civilization in Christian Europe which is distinguished by the name of chivalry, the Normans have never ceased to hold the first place in modern history. Yet the praise is bestowed as arbitrarily as when nature permits flowers to spring forth alike on the grave of the robber and on that of the holy patriarch.

The name of Northmen or Normans, which first occurs in the Geographer of Ravenna, had originally no reference to any particular country, but was adopted merely to designate the relative position of the native home of those rovers with reference to the Christian states, and more especially to France. The Anglo-Saxons were accustomed to call them Danes,¹ under which appellation the Frank Eginhard,² a contemporary of Ecgberht, comprised both Danes and Swedes ; but Ælfred, the grandson of Ecgberht, who had had personal intercourse with the leaders of the Northmen, excludes the Swedes from that denomination.³ To limit the home of the Northmen to Norway is an error of historic inquirers, who have overlooked the fact, that the name of Norway dates only from the eleventh century,⁴ and was applied with immediate reference to those Normans, whose name, through their settlement

¹ So Sax. Chron., but Asser, *Vita Ælfr.*, “*pagani, Normanni sive Dani.*”

² *Vita Caroli*, cc. xiii., xv. Adam Brem. lib. i. c. 13 and c. 220, copies Eginhard, while c. 238, he speaks from the knowledge of his time, the eleventh century.

³ Ælfred's Germany in Dahlmann's *Forschungen*, p. 421.

⁴ Adam Brem. c. 238. “*Nordmannia . . . a modernis dicitur Norwegia;*” after whom Ordericus Vitalis (*Du Chesne*, p. 541) has *Norregavia*, though not as a synonyme of *Dacia*, as Depping (t. ii.

in the French Normandy, has acquired a narrower signification. It is true, that from the shores of that country, the inexhaustible cradle of bold seamen, there proceeded men who, like those of the Danish islands and the Jutish peninsula, attacked the English and Scottish isles, the Orkneys and Hebrides, as well as Ireland. From here too came the pirates, who in the reign of Beorhtric landed in Wessex, and were called Northmen from Haretha-land, by which denomination we are probably to understand Hördeland in Norway,¹ famed for its sea-kings, and which at a later period sent forth the indomitable discoverers of Iceland.

The cause of the emigrations of the Northmen is not to be immediately looked for in the peculiar habits of that people. The poverty of those regions, where, even in the summer months, the encumbrance of rocks and their numberless fragments, which gave to every field the aspect of a recent Titanic battle-place, permits neither seed nor cattle to thrive, and the disproportionate population appeared as embarrassing to their rugged contemporaries a thousand years ago, as the subject of over-population is to the acute inquirer of the present age.² But in those days, when there were people only, not established states, a remedy was soon

p. 257 seems to take it, whose '*Histoire des expéditions maritimes des Normands et de leur établissement en France*' contains much relative to the landings of the Northmen in England. In the present work I have made occasional use of my review in the *Halle Literatur Zeitung* for 1832 of M. Depping's excellent publication.

¹ Theodoricus de Regibus Norvegiæ, ap. Langebek, t. v. p. 315. In the battle in Hafursfjord (circa 885) Erik king of Hördaland was slain. See Snorre, *Haralds saga ens Hårfagra*, c. xix. Halfe, another king of this territory, is mentioned at an earlier period.

² See Otather's Voyage.

found ; and we perceive, even after the cessation of the great migration of nations and the fall of the Western empire, an incessant outpouring of Northlanders over the North and Baltic seas, in quest of booty and a home.

While in the sixth century Britain admitted of no more great bodies of immigrants, the Longobards were making room in other tracts, a circumstance which rendered favourable the advance of remoter tribes in the North. Of the greatest influence, however, on those nations were the conquests of Charles the Great in Germany, and the barrier which he thereby, as well as by the introduction of Christianity, set to their onward march. It can, indeed, hardly be attributed to accident, that a few years after the baptism of Wittekind, the first Northmen appeared in England, and, that with the gradual strengthening of the Frankish dominion, their hordes passed over in ever-increasing numbers.

The course followed by the emigrants was similar to that adopted by the German leaders (Recken) with their followers. We find generally, when the names of the leaders are given, two or three at the head of several tribes or clans, combined for a short period and for a specific object.¹ Thus Ingvar and Ubba, Oskytel and Guthrum, Björn and Hasting, appear in brotherly union in their expeditions. The Northmen in this instance, as in other cases, brought into England few new usages and no very influential principles. If, in the dukedom which they acquired in France, they in a short time adopted the language of that country and

¹ As in Prudent. Trecensis, a. 850, ap. Pertz, t. i. Hincmar. Rhemens. a. 861 . . . "eorum societate junguntur . . . se secundum socialitates suas dividunt."

almost forgot their own ; if they there, where they held free and unbounded sway, introduced no legal institute, no usage which can be exclusively attributed to them, much less can any great innovations, caused by the Northmen, be looked for in England, which had for ages been inhabited not only by Saxons, but by their neighbours the Angles and the Jutes. The circumstance that the latter had not abandoned but rather cultivated their old native tongue, may have been among the causes which prompted the Danes and other Northmen to seek the shores of England, where at a later period they settled chiefly in the districts peopled by the Angles. If this remark offer any explanation of the success which attended the Danes on the east coasts of Middle England, it, on the other hand, renders it the more difficult to ascertain what new element they may have introduced, what lasting institutions they may there have left behind them. The history of the Danes or Northmen in England has yet found no deep investigator, hence too much has been ascribed to their influence on the institutions and language of the country. If we unhesitatingly grant that by the term Normans we are in most cases to understand, not original Scandinavians, but the Gallo-Normans of a later day, to these can certainly not be attributed the influence which the Danes are supposed to have exercised over the dialect of the northern parts of England. But every inquiry into the history of the English language has hitherto, from an insufficiency of materials, been unattended with any important consequences with reference to the undoubted difference of dialect prevailing in the Saxon and Anglian provinces of Britain. For the present, therefore, it is from general observations only that a judgment can be formed, and

the result is decidedly adverse to those historians who would ascribe what is native, though now perhaps inexplicable, to the influence of the pirates of the North. These observations lead us to infer that the influence of the Northmen in England is to be regarded only as repressive and destructive, but, that they attached themselves to existing political institutions, with which in principle they were familiar, as well as to the church, which was new to them. The pen has ever triumphed over the sword, the olive over the laurel, mental culture over barbarian violence; written language over unwritten. Thus we see that even the home of the Northmen is indebted for its alphabetic writing to the Anglo-Saxons. With the exception of the isles and of parts of Britain which were not previously inhabited by Anglo-Saxons, we nowhere perceive in the language any essential elements which are not either Old-Saxon or Anglian, and we may therefore regard the variations of dialect which appear in later times only as a continuation of the old language negatively promoted by the Danes in the northern provinces, and slightly intermixed with the Norman French. This observation we believe to be particularly applicable to the northern parts of Northumbria, the present Scottish Lowlands, where the origin of the local dialect is ascribed to Scandinavian or, as it is most usually termed, Gothic influence, at some unknown period of time. This is the dialect which the Gael of the present day calls Sassenach, and which, in the lays of Allan Ramsay and Robert Burns, strikes on the German ear in familiar Saxon sounds.

A difficulty similar to that attending the Anglo-Saxon and Danish languages, exists with regard to the legendary lore received and cultivated in England. Of

this much that was new to the English settlers must have been introduced by the later Northmen, and much also revived, which Christianity and Roman civilization had banished from the memory of the sons of Woden.

Of some other traces, real or supposed, of the manners and customs of the Danes existing in England, occasional mention will be made hereafter. Here we shall merely remark, that in the history of a state destined one day to rule the ocean, **it** ought not to be passed unnoticed, that England may have learned the art of ship-building from an enemy ; though at the same time we must be careful not to overrate this benefit, even if it admitted of proof. The history of the following centuries does not indeed show that the English at an early period were great navigators or traders to foreign parts, while, at the same time, the vessels of the Northmen appear from all accounts, and even from the specimens that have been discovered, to have been of small dimensions, and very inartificially constructed. A piratical band sometimes required four or five hundred such vessels, in which to navigate the smallest rivers ; and if a shallow ford, or want of water, impeded their course, the crews would spring on shore, draw the vessel to land, and bear it further on their shoulders. The circumstance that the greater number of nautical terms are alike in English and in the Scandinavian tongues ought not to be held as of weight, since the Saxons had of old been known as bold mariners, and as the same objection might be applied with regard to the Southern tongues, most particularly to the Spanish, and is to be answered only by the supposition of an earlier influence of the Germanic nations in matters of navigation.

The moral impression made by the Northmen in England was that of fear, astonishment, stupefying

terror. The cruelties by which the invasions of these pagans were accompanied, defy all description; and of all the ills with which the oft-afflicted country was visited, the calamities caused by the Danes are by the old chroniclers described as the most dreadful.¹ Even victory over these barbarians was productive of little joy, and dearly bought, relieving merely the spot where they had landed, while other murderous hordes with the greater security were landing on other points, thus rendering the vast extent of coast—in which England in after ages, through the wooden bulwark of her fleets, found her best defence and the capability of the most varied and boundless commerce—her greatest affliction at that period.

Dense as is the obscurity in which the cause of the wanderings and ravages of the Scandinavian vikings is enveloped,² an attentive consideration of their expeditions to England will, nevertheless, yield some results tending greatly to facilitate our inquiries.

¹ H. Hunt. lib. v. Proœm. "(Plaga) per Dacos facta longe immanior, longe crudelior cæteris fuit. Daci terram undique creberrime diutissime insilientes et assilientes, eam non obtinere sed prædari studebant, et omnia destruere, non dominari cupiebant. Qui si quandoque vincerentur, nihil proficiebant victores, cum alibi classis et exercitus major insurgeret. . . . Domos combusserunt, res as; ortarunt, pueros sursum jactatos lancearum acumine susceperunt, conjuges quasdam vi oppresserunt, quasdam secum abduxerunt."

² The pernicious law of primogeniture was a chief cause of the miseries endured by this and other countries of Europe from the pirates of Scandinavia. The eldest son of an aristocratic house inherited the family property; the younger ones were not indeed quartered on their own country, but were sent forth in ships, for the purpose of plundering the happier lands of the South. From these expeditions the idea first sprang of making permanent conquests, which ended in the establishment of Scandinavian dynasties in England, and in the Frankish province of Neustria and in the south of Italy.—T.

Thus we are led first to regard them as a consequence of the conquests of Charles the Great in the north of Germany, and secondly to observe that the Northmen did not at first overrun the country in any vast swarms, like locusts, but that they only gradually became formidable. In the time to which we have already alluded, and in that immediately following, we find long intervals, during which no mention is made of the Northmen. Indeed some of their first attacks were made with such small forces, and sometimes such trifling results, that only the loss of some noble or official and the mischief, which they afterwards perpetrated over the whole country, procured for those beginnings of evil any attention on the part of the chroniclers. The attacks of the Northmen were at first less directed against England itself than against its islands, and the opposite shores of Flanders and Holland, also Ireland, where they acquired several strong settlements, from which they sailed on their piratical expeditions. Small islands at the mouths of large rivers were to them especial objects of selection, whence they could easily watch and intercept the trading vessels, and where they could deposit their booty in safety. Hence we find them at the mouths of the Scheldt, the Seine, the Loire and the Thames. The want of nautical knowledge at that period, for which daring and energy are no equivalent, prevented them from making the greater number of their expeditions direct from the North, but induced them, at that time as at a later period, to prefer coasting voyages with their small ships, and consequently to seek winter stations and settlements. Under the hypothesis, therefore, that the attacks of the Northmen on England were not directed from remote points, it will perhaps be possible, when

the history of the islands and coasts of the German Ocean as well as of the Atlantic west of England shall be investigated, to show, that they were conducted with more system and connection than has hitherto been supposed. Adopting the above view, we shall be enabled to derive some unexpected light from the Frankish chroniclers with respect to the attacks of the Northmen on the eastern shore of England. Thus it would seem that on this coast more defined individuals, and better known names appear on the field of action, while of the assailants on the coast of Wessex we are seldom informed of more than the number of their ships, although it may reasonably be supposed that for the most part they crossed over from the Scandinavian settlements at Dublin and on the east coast of Ireland (where they were called Ostmen), and also from their insulated state, the Orkneys and Hebrides.

If any reliance may be placed on some legends, and more particularly on the older Danish royal sagas, the Danes had made several attacks on England long before that already mentioned under the reign of Beorhtric, on the coast of Dorsetshire, and those in 793 and 794 at Lindisfarne and Ecgferthes-Mynster. The most authentic English chroniclers speak indeed of the first mentioned of these as the first appearance of the Danish pirates on the coast of England; and from all that has hitherto been stated, it is probable that it was only in the following times that their attacks became frequent and formidable. Some discrepant accounts given in the English chronicles may not, however, be wholly groundless: the most remarkable of which makes mention of an attack on the monastery of Lindisfarne, about the year 687, which is ascribed to the Scaldings or Northmen; though there is great reason for believing

that the northern enemies at that time were Picts,¹ who, as we have seen, had humbled and driven back the Northumbrians after the death of Ecgfrith. It is not improbable that these were the northern enemies who, through their ravages in Northumbria, caused Ticta, who was abbot of Glastonbury in 754, to flee from that kingdom.² Attention has been drawn to a landing which is said to have been made in Thanet in the year 753, but which may possibly be identical with one which took place a century later, although unimportant landings and interruptions of navigation by these pirates at an earlier period may be proved, which do not appear to have excited the attention of the princes.³ Nor is it to be doubted that after the year 795 the landings of the Northmen became more frequent, though the chronicles in which they are recorded may be lost. The obstinacy of the battles fought in the years 832 and 833, forbids us longer to ascribe to the invading Northmen mere objects of piracy and plunder along the coasts, and compels us to infer the adoption of a plan for a permanent settlement, where

¹ Beda, *Vita S. Cuthb.* c. xl., where it merely says, "*ecclesiam illam tentationis aura concussit.*" In the metrical *Life*, c. xxxvii., it is said,

"Insistens aquilo, niveis confusus in armis,
Hinc atque hinc adeo Lindisfarnea perosis
Tecta quatit flabris" . . .

Sim. Dunelm. Hist. Cuthb. p. 69, mentions an invasion of the 'Scaldings,' who also destroyed York.

² *Vita S. Patricii* ap. Alford, *Annal. Eccl. Anglo-Saxon.* t. ii.

³ Bregowini *Epist. ad Lullum* (ap. Bonifacii *Epist.* Nr. 103): "Crebris infestationibus improborum hominum in provincias Anglorum seu Galliae regiones. Nunc vero pace ac tuitione nobis a principibus indubitanter undique promissa." . . . Lullus died in 786: Bregowine was probably the archbishop of Canterbury from 759-762.

either by sea or by land, by war or by industry, they might gain wherewithal to supply the wants of life, or indulge the insolence of brute strength in contempt of social order. This inference appears the more probable, as shortly afterwards a numerous army of Danes, in alliance with the West-Britons, attacked king Ecgberht, and were, as we have seen, totally defeated by him at Hengestes-dûn. Such an alliance between two nations so unconnected by descent and language implies some previous intercourse, and leads to the supposition, that these Danes belonged to the Danish hordes already settled in Ireland or the Hebrides. From such a cause only it seems explicable that, during a long period, to the end of the ninth century, no hostile landings of the Danes are recorded on any of the British coasts, which could hardly have been protected either by artificial fastnesses or the poverty of the mountain inhabitants against the hordes of the North. Similar alliances with the Danes were also formed by the Bretons in France against the Franks.¹

¹ **Hincmar** Rhemens. *Annal.* a. 866.

CHAPTER II.

A.D. 836.

Ecgeberht's Son and Grandsons—Æthelwulf 836-857—Wars with the Northmen—Division of his Kingdom with his Son—Subjection of Mona—Æthelwulf's Piety, Talents, and Energy—His Children—Consecration of Ælfred—King's Journey with Ælfred to Rome—Rebellion of Æthelbald—Æthelwulf's Will—His Death 855—Æthelbald succeeds 855—Dies 860—Æthelberht 860-866.

ECGBERHT was succeeded in the kingdom of Wessex by his eldest son Æthelwulf. Under this prince the Northmen indefatigably continued their ravages on the same coasts. At Southampton they landed from a fleet of thirty-four sail, but were met by the ealdorman Wulfheard, and overcome with great slaughter. Less fortunate was the ealdorman Æthelhelm, who with the men of Dorsetshire encountered a Danish army on the island of Portland, where, though victory at first seemed to declare in his favour, he was defeated and slain.¹ These piratical swarms had now so greatly increased that they encompassed the island as with a net.

In the following year Herebryht the ealdorman, with many inhabitants of the marshes, was slain by the Northmen, as were also many of the people of Lindsey, East Anglia and Kent. At London, Canterbury and Rochester they also made great slaughter, and Æthelwulf himself was shortly after defeated at Carrum

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 837.

(Charmouth), by a Danish force from thirty-five vessels.¹

A few years later a body of Danes landed in Northumbria, which, since the death of Ecgberht, had been torn by the struggles of competitors for the vacant throne. Æthelred, the son and successor of Eanred, had been expelled by Redwulf, who had taken possession of the government. With the ealdorman Ælfred, Redwulf led his forces against the invaders, but was defeated and slain by them at "Alvethesleie,"² when Æthelred regained possession of his kingdom. More fortunate were the ealdorman Eanulf with the men of Somersetshire and the warlike bishop Ealhstan, and the ealdorman Osric with those of Dorsetshire, who defeated with great slaughter a Danish army that had landed at the mouth of the Parret in the Bristol Channel.³ Six years later another victory, attended with great slaughter of the enemy, was gained at Wicganbeorh in Devonshire by the ealdorman Ceorl; and the same year Æthelstan, the king of Kent, and the ealdorman Ealhhere, defeated them in a sea-fight off Sandwich, and took nine of their ships. A swarm of Northmen now for the first time passed the winter in the isle of Thanet.⁴ Immediately following these events a fleet of Northmen, the largest yet seen, and consisting of no less than three hundred and fifty sail

¹ Sax. Chron. aa. 838, 840.

² Matt. Westm. a. 844.

³ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 845. For a landing of the Northmen in England in 844, and the defeat of the Saxons, after a battle which lasted three days, see Prudent. Trecens. Annal., and an extract therefrom in Chron. de Gestis Normannorum.

⁴ Sax. Chron. Ethelw. a. 851, while Asser and Fl. W. for "Thanet" read "Shephey;" but in the Chronicle a. 855, it is said that "the heathen men then for the first time remained over winter in Shephey."—T.

arrived at the mouth of the Thames, whence they penetrated to Canterbury and even to London, both of which they took and plundered, having put to flight the army of Beorhtwulf, the tributary king of the Mercians, who had endeavoured to impede their progress. They then crossed the Thames into Surrey, where they were met by king Æthelwulf and his son Æthelbald, by whom, in a great battle fought at Aclea (Ockley), they were totally defeated. In this conflict a greater slaughter is said to have been made among the pagans than they had ever suffered in a single day in any country.¹ This fleet was a part of that of Rörik, a nephew of the Danish prince Harald Klak, which latter, having in the year 826 received baptism at Ingelheim, had by Lewis the Debonair been invested with the territory of Rustringen and the town of Dorstadt in Friesland.² Such enfeoffments had for object the buying off of some of the most formidable leaders among the Northmen, and consequent security against their followers and countrymen, a policy first adopted by the Romans towards the Germanic tribes, which was shortly after practised by the Anglo-Saxons, and with the same unlooked-for result, since the formidable foe, neither by the accepted feudal relationship, nor by the common bond of Christianity, could be brought to an observance of peace towards the Christian states. On the contrary, the countless swarms of their countrymen who followed in their track found in these

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 851.

² I owe this valuable account to Prudent. Trecens. a. 850. "Roric, nepos Herioldi . . . assumptis Nortmannorum exercitibus, cum multitudine navium Fresiam . . . devastat . . . ceterorum vero pars Britanniam insulam Anglosque impetentes, ab eis auxilio Domini nostri Jesu Christi superantur." Rudolf. Fuldens. a. 850, calls him the brother of the younger Harald.

feudal chieftains the surest and ablest leaders, while the latter constantly gained auxiliaries in the newcomers. This inexhaustibleness of the enemy was particularly felt by England. Two years after the above-mentioned defeat at Ockley, a battle was fought between the Northmen who had wintered in Thanet, and the men of Kent and Surrey, under the ealdormen Ealhhere and Huda, in which, though the English at first had the advantage, the Northmen were ultimately victorious, both ealdormen being slain.¹ As for some years to come no further mention of the Northmen is made by the chroniclers, we will revert to the internal affairs of the Anglo-Saxons.

Æthelwulf, on assuming the reins of government, committed the kingdoms of Kent, Essex, Surrey and Sussex, over which he had previously ruled, to his son Æthelstan.² Ecgberht had intrusted the education of Æthelwulf to Swithun, a priest of the church of Winchester, a sagacious and experienced man, who in secular affairs had, both by word and deed, been eminently serviceable to his master.³ The talents of Æthelwulf seem not to have been brilliant, while a love of peace and tranquillity was his leading

¹ Sax. Chron. Asser. Fl. W. a. 853.

² Sax. Chron., Ethelwerd, lib. iii., Asser, V. A. [in the later MSS.], Fl. W., W. Malm., H. Hunt., Chron. Mailros., Matt. Westm., make Æthelstan the second son of Ecgberht.

³ By Malmesb. (de Pontif. l. ii.) we are told that Æthelwulf had been educated for the church, and already taken the degree of subdeacon at Winchester, when on his father's death he was called to the vacant throne, with the consent of pope Leo III. The story may not be wholly groundless, though it must be observed that Leo died in 816. The error may, it is true, consist solely in the name of the pope; though the silence of the earlier chroniclers (except H. Hunt., who makes him bishop of Winchester at his father's death) is very unfavourable to the credibility of the account.—T.

characteristic, and had probably been much fostered by a priestly education. In the first year of his reign, his piety prompted him to resolve on a pilgrimage to Rome, and to endeavour by religious exhortations, addressed even to the Frankish monarch, to alleviate the misery of the world.¹ The emperor Lewis also received an embassy from the king of the Angles for the effecting of both these objects, but the contemplated royal pilgrimage seems to have been prevented by the war with the Northmen; the history of the first sixteen years of Æthelwulf's reign being, as we have seen, engrossed by the wars with these barbarians. His attention was next directed to the affairs of the Mercians, whose king, Burhred, who had succeeded Beorhtwulf, the successor of Wiglaf,² had solicited his aid in subduing the refractory Britons dwelling between Mercia and the Western or Irish sea, who under their king Rotri Mawr, or Roderic the Great, had by their hostilities rendered themselves extremely formidable. Having united his forces with those of the Mercians, Æthelwulf penetrated the country to the isle of Mona, and compelled the natives to pay the wonted tribute and acknowledge the supremacy of Mercia. In the same year Æthelwulf gave his daughter Æthelswyth in marriage to Burhred, whose nuptials were solemnized in a great festival at Chippenham.³

By his wife Osburh, a daughter of Oslac his cup-bearer, descended from Wihtgar the nephew of Cerdic,

¹ Prudent. Trecens. a. 839.

² Ob. 838. Fl. Geneal.

³ Sax. Chron. Asser. Flor. W. a. 853. Caradoc, p. 35. On the division of the kingdom in 876 between the sons of Roderic, the payment of the tribute continued to be made at Aberfraw in the territory of the eldest son, to whom the other lands—Powis and Dinefawr—were subjected.

Æthelwulf had, besides the daughter just mentioned, five sons: Æthelstan, Æthelbald, Æthelberht, Æthelred and Ælfred, who, though but five years old at the time of his sister's marriage, was soon to begin the course which has rendered the story of his eventful life the most attractive section of Anglo-Saxon history. We see at the same time his father Æthelwulf entering on a series of relations with the continent, and especially with Rome, which we ought perhaps not to view merely as the effect of a religious education, but also of an enlightened policy, calculated to raise the position of England to a level with the rest of Europe. The sanction which Charles the Great had procured for his sovereignty through his coronation by the pope was not a matter of indifference to his contemporaries; but had, on the contrary, become an object of emulation and envy to other princes. The king of England, with his recent increase of power, might naturally desire a similar consecration, at least for his successor, and the pope, it is easy to conceive, would show no reluctance to perform a ceremony which tended incontrovertibly to confirm the pretensions of himself and the church over the Christian world.

A less important object can hardly have induced the king to expose the youngest and most beloved of his children to the perils of a journey over sea and mountains, when with a numerous train of nobles and vassals he sent his son Ælfred to Rome, where he was anointed as king by the pope Leo the Fourth.¹ Whether it was from caprice that he caused the youngest of his sons to be consecrated by the sovereign pontiff, or whether he

¹ Asser, a. 853. "Leo papa quartus . . . præfatum infantem Ælfredum oppido ordinans, unxit in regem, et in filium adoptionis sibi accipiens confirmavit."

had any other object in contemplation, cannot, in consequence of the lack of materials, be now determined; nor are we better informed as to the details of this extraordinary ceremony, which implies a long preliminary negotiation. Our want of information is also much to be regretted respecting Osburh, the mother of Ælfred, from whom, it would seem, Æthelwulf had separated, though, at a later period, she took tender interest in the education of her children. As Ælfred was apparently only anointed, and not expressly designated king of all England, the sovereignty of which fell to him only after the death of all his brothers, the cause of Æthelwulf's journey to Rome may have been more accidental than it now appears, and the importance of the anointing enhanced in the eyes of his people by the later glories of his reign.

Two years later Æthelwulf executed his long-cherished design,¹ and set out, accompanied by his son Ælfred, on a journey to Rome. On his way he visited the most celebrated churches of France, and was honourably received and entertained by king Charles the Bald. At Rome he passed a whole year in exercises of devotion, and in viewing the remains of its former glory. The Roman annals have carefully registered the costly gifts, in gold and precious stones and silken robes, presented to St. Peter by the pious and wealthy Anglo-Saxon king. The bishops, the inferior clergy, the nobles, and even the common people of Rome partook of his munificence.² The Saxon school, which had a

¹ Prudent. Trecens. a. 839. Sax. Chron. a. 855.

² Anastasii Vitæ Pontif. ap. Muratori, t. iii. p. 251. The king was invited to attend the covering in of the roof of St. Pierre de Ferrières in the diocese of Sens, by letters sent to him and his secretary Felix from Lupus, the abbot of that monastery. The

second time perished by fire, was restored by Æthelwulf, and a foundation for the salvation of his soul was established by him with a yearly endowment of three hundred mancuses, from which originated the Peter's pence (Rome-scot, Romfeoh) so burdensome at a later period.¹ Æthelwulf also obtained an ordinance, that no Englishman should be condemned to penance in irons out of his own country.² Of the pretended introduction of tithes, and of other institutions ascribed with better foundation to this king, we have already spoken.

Not a little extraordinary, and perhaps only to be explained by his desire to unite himself more closely with the rest of Europe, is one act of Æthelwulf still to be recorded. On his return home he again passed some time at the hospitable court of Charles the Bald, whose daughter Judith, then only twelve years of age, he married, after a courtship of three months. The nuptial ceremony was performed at Verberie sur Oise

letters of the latter to Wigmund, archbishop of York, and to the abbot Altisig show the great intercourse between the two countries. See Lupi Epist. xiii. xiv. xliii. lxi. lxii.

¹ By R. Wendover and Matthew of Westminster the first introduction of Peter's pence is attributed to Ine.

² For parricide and other atrocious crimes the church condemned its penitents to wear irons for a certain number of years, and occasionally sent them for absolution to the pope at Rome. Of one of these culprits Wulstan, bishop of Winchester, writes:

“*Nam occidit proprium crudeli morte parentem,
Unde reo statim præcepit episcopus urbis,
Ferreus ut ventrem constringeret acriter omnem
Circulus, et similem paterentur brachia pœnam;
Continuosque novem semet cruciando per annos,
Atria sacrorum lustraret sæpe locorum;
Viseret et sacri pulcherrima limina Petri,
Quo veniam tantæ mereretur sumere culpæ.*”

Acta Benedict. Sæc. iv. t. ii. p. 72.—T.

by Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims.¹ In defiance of the unjust usage introduced in consequence of the misdeeds of Eadburh, Æthelwulf placed Judith by his side on a royal throne, and gave her the title of queen, which she held till her death, without any opposition or expression of dissatisfaction on the part of the nobles.²

After these transactions, by which the rights of his elder children and those of their mother were so grossly prejudiced, it will excite no surprise that Æthelwulf did not meet with a welcome reception on his return. Æthelbald, his eldest surviving son, with Ealhstan, bishop of Sherborne, and Eanwulf, the ealdorman of the Sumorsætas, formed a conspiracy in the forest of Selwood, to prevent the entrance of Æthelwulf into his kingdom. Though supported by a majority of the nobles, the king, to prevent the miseries attending a civil war, consented to resign the western portion of the realm to his rebellious son and to content himself with the eastern parts, the former appanage of his eldest son Æthelstan, then lately deceased. Two years after his return Æthelwulf died.³ By his will, which was confirmed in a general assembly of his nobles, he bequeathed Kent and the other territories over which he had last held sway to his second son Æthelberht.⁴ Wessex after the death of Æthelbald he left in succession to Æthelred and Ælfred. By this instrument the king

¹ Prudent. Trecens. Annal. a. 856. Asser. The Latin form of this marriage service is extant. See Bouquet, t. vii. p. 621.

² Asser. Fl. W. a. 855.

³ Ob. a. 858. Sax. Chron. a. 855. Asser. Ethelw. Annal. Bertin.

⁴ It seems doubtful whether Essex still belonged to this kingdom, as Asser, a. 860, makes no mention of it.

of Kent was excluded¹ from all hereditary claim on the kingdom of Wessex, as well as on the private possessions (*bôcland*) of the deceased king, which were charged with the obligation of providing on every ten hides meat, drink and clothing for one poor person or stranger, besides a yearly payment of three hundred mancuses to the holy see, two hundred of which were for the purchase of oil for the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul at Easter, and one hundred for the pope. Æthelwulf was buried at Winchester.²

The short reign of Æthelbald after the death of his father is sullied by his marriage with his young step-mother. The people were irritated at the renewal of a connection which they had previously regarded with aversion; while the clergy were provoked by the contempt shown for the ecclesiastical laws. Æthelbald, therefore, yielding to the earnest remonstrances of Swithun bishop of Winchester, resolved on a separation from Judith, who, having sold the possessions she had received as dower (*morgen-gifu*), returned to France.³ She gave no heir to England, but from her subsequent marriage with Baldwin Count of Flanders sprang Mathilda, the consort of William the Conqueror. Æthelbald⁴ died after a peaceful reign of five years over Wessex. His early death was lamented by all the people of England, who too soon had cause to feel how great a loss they had sustained.⁵

¹ See Ælfred's Testament, edit. Oxford, in Wise's edit. of Asser, and *Cod. Diplom.* ii. p. 112, or the Latin translation in Camden, *Scriptt. Rer. Angl.* p. 22, and Spelmanni *Vita Ælfredi*.

² Asser. *Fl. W. a.* 855.

³ Asser. *Prudent. Trecens. a.* 858. *Hincmar, a.* 862. The account of the divorce rests solely on *Matt. Westm.* and *Thomas Rudborn.* *Annual. Eccles. Winton.*

⁴ *An.* 860. *Sax. Chron.*

⁵ H. Hunt.

After the death of Æthelbald, Æthelred,¹ the third son of Æthelwulf, ought to have succeeded to the throne of Wessex; but his elder brother, Æthelberht king of Kent, in contravention to his father's will, which, in all that regarded the succession to the throne, could not be binding on the people of Wessex, was enabled to make good his claim as the successor of his elder brother.

Since the year 854 the Danes had made no memorable attacks on England, till, during the reign of this prince, when a large body under their leader Weland,² who had been stationed on the banks of the Somme,—encouraged probably by the death of the valiant king Æthelbald,—landed at Southampton, and thence proceeded to Winchester, which city and its churches they most cruelly ravaged, not sparing the life of a single monk of the cathedral. On their return to their ships with an immense booty, they were, however, met by Osric and Æthelwulf, the ealdormen of Hampshire and Berkshire, with their followers, and, after a bloody conflict, put to flight. In the fifth year of his reign an army of Northmen landed in Thanet, to whom the people of Kent engaged to pay a sum of money for peace; but while the negotiation was pending, the invaders, well knowing that more was to be gained by plundering the country than by any treaty, burst from their camp in the night, and ravaged all the eastern part of the province.

After an honourable and mild reign of five years, Æthelberht, greatly to his people's sorrow,³ died, and like his brother was buried at Sherborne. Both realms now fell to his brother Æthelred.

¹ The name of this prince is usually contracted into Æthered or Ethered.—T.

² I get the name of their leader from Prudent. Trecens. a. 860. Hincmar, a. 861. For the rest see Asser, aa. 860, 861.

³ An. 866. Sax. Chron. Asser.

CHAPTER III.

A.D. 866-871.

Æthelred I.—Contests with Danes—Their Leaders—Traditions concerning them—Danes in East-Anglia and Northumbria—Martyrdom of King Eadmund—Battles at Ashdown and Merton.

THE history of Æthelred's reign of five years is little else than that of a series of new and unfortunate contests with the Danes, who in his days first gained a firm footing in the country.

About the year 867¹ the Danes made an attack on England, the consequences of which were too great not to have called into activity the imagination of succeeding races at the expense of historic truth. The Danish leaders Ingvar and Ubba—the first whose names are given in the Anglo-Saxon annals—were, according to the sagas of the North, the sons of king Regnar Lodbrog. This prince, as these sagas, and particularly the celebrated death-song ascribed to him, inform us, had, after many victories in the countries of the Baltic, sailed to Britain, where he slew the Anglo-

¹ Simeon, de Dunelm. Eccles. c. vi. gives expressly 867, or the fifth year of the reign of Ælle. Asser, a. 867, with less precision says, "Eo tempore (Northanhymbri) legitimum regem suum, Osbyrht nomine, regno expulerant, et tyrannum quendam, Ælla nomine, non de regali prosapia progenitum, super apicem constituerant:" not thereby meaning that 867 was the first year of Ælle's reign.

Saxon Waltheow, and ravaged Scotland, Ireland and the smaller islands, but at length having been driven on the coast of Northumbria, was there taken prisoner by the King Ælle, and by him put to death, by being cast into a dungeon among venomous snakes. These sagas, on which our knowledge of Scandinavian history in great measure depends, place the celebrated conqueror Regnar Lodbrog a century earlier than the period at which, according to history, the invasion of England by his sons took place, and when Ælle, in rebellion against Osbriht, the successor of Æthelred, gained possession of Northumberland. The older English annals, on the other hand, make mention neither of Regnar Lodbrog, nor of any extraordinary cause of the invasion by Ingvar and Ubba;¹ and in Asser, a contemporary, we find of all the three names, only that of Ingvar.² At the same time, in addition to the ancient celebrated death-song, or Krâkumâl,³ there is no lack of respectable

¹ Annal. Inisfal. (cod. Dubl.) a. 870: Anelaf and Imar (before written Ibar) leave Dublin, "cum gente navium cc., ad auxilium præbendum Danis, Britanniae cum suis ducibus Danis, nempe Hingaro et Hubba."

² Both are mentioned in Sax. Chron. a. 870, H. Hunt., W. Malm., while the later chroniclers. e. g. Asser, Annal. a. 878 (and from these the worst MSS. of the Vita Ælfredi), say, "Dicunt quod tres sorores Hinguarii et Hubbæ, filiæ videlicet Lodebrocki, illud vexillum texerunt," etc. Fl. W. a. 870, citing the 'Passio S. Eadmundi,' names only Ingvar. Ethelwerd also speaks only of the "classis tyranni Igwares." Simeon, de Dunelm. Eccles. c. vi. names Hinguar and Hubba with other Danish kings.

³ English versions of the Death-song made for Regnar, accompanied by the original text, have been given by Johnstone and others, but the most complete edition of this celebrated composition is that by Rafn, accompanied by a Danish, Latin and French version, printed at Copenhagen in 1826, 8vo. For a general account of Lodbrog's Saga, see Müller's Sagabibliothek, Bd. ii. p. 464 sq., and Geijer, Svea Rikes Häfder, Bd. i. p. 545 sq.

authorities, according to which the Regnar Lodbrog,—with whom, even if we do not acknowledge him as a strictly historic personage, we are at present concerned,—not only lived in the middle of the ninth century, but died in Northumbria and was the father of Ingvar and Ubba.¹ The silence of the older English, and in general of all the older chroniclers, with regard to Regnar's death in Northumberland is, however, the more important, when we see that his sons, whose object it was to avenge his death, do not land in that territory, but in East Anglia, and that in the later English chroniclers we find wholly different accounts relative to the cause of their coming.

According to one tradition ² it is stated, that a Dane of royal lineage, named Lothebrok, with his hawk, being in a boat driven by a storm from Denmark to the coast of East Anglia, was conducted to king Eadmund, by whose huntsman Björn he was slain; and that this Björn, as a punishment, being also sent out to sea alone in an open boat, was driven to Denmark, where he

¹ Hamsfort, Chronol. Prima, ap. Langebek, t. i. p. 35, a. 854. "Regnerus, ab Hella Hybernorum regulo captus, gravi supplicio afficitur, necatus in carcere. Fossius habet annum 865." It would be desirable to know whence these writers have taken their tolerably accurate accounts. Th. Torfæus, Hist. Norweg. ii. 377, gives 845 as the year of Regnar's death. More important to us is the Historia S. Edmundi (Acta Sanctor. sub Nov. 20), which was used by the Icelander Are Frodi, when mentioning the death of Eadmund through Ivar, Regnar Lodbrog's son, in 870. Adam of Bremen (lib. i. c. 33), after quotations from the Historia Francorum (Annales Fuldenses, a. 873), "Scriptum est in Gestis Francorum, Cruclissimus omnium fuit Ingvar filius Lodparchi, qui Christianos ubique per supplicia necavit." These 'Gesta Francorum' used by Adam are unfortunately unknown to us. For Regnar's death in England, Sim. Dunelm. a. 794 is the only English authority we can specify.

² So Matt. Westm. a. 870.

instigated the sons of Lothebrok to vengeance against his own king.

Another tradition,¹ equally ancient with the foregoing is, that a nobleman named Björn Butsekarl (Buern Buzecarle), by others called Bruern Bocard, whose wife, during her husband's absence, had suffered violence from Osbriht, had in revenge invited the Danish king Codrinus to invade the kingdom of Northumbria, while Osbriht was by the relations of Björn driven from the throne, and Ælle set in his place. This saga, which has been overlooked by historians, may not be wholly void of foundation, as it is not irreconcilable with the chronology; assigns a cause for the invasion of Northumbria; bears no semblance of poetic fiction; and, under the name of king Codrinus, presents to us that Guthrum who appears shortly after as the conqueror of East Anglia. It may, moreover, show that the real cause of Guthrum's expedition to England was distinct from that which called thither his allies Ingvar and Ubba. Under all circumstances it is undeniable that these barbarians now assailed the Northern parts of England in much larger bodies than those in which they had previously appeared; that their operations were conducted more systematically and with greater cruelty; and that they found the country in a state of anarchy but too favourable to foreign conquest. In the Danes also, who now landed, we recognise with greater precision the inhabitants of the Danish insular

¹ Goffrei Gaimar, v. 2590 sq. Douglas of Glastonbury, MS. Hamb. Bromton, pp. 802, 809. Hector Boethii Hist Scot. A nearly similar adventure of king Ælle with Ærnulf, a rich merchant of York, surnamed the Seafarer, and his beautiful wife at Beckwith, is related by the editor of Gaimar, from a MS. of the 12th century (C. C. C. C. No. cxxxix.), as the cause of the coming of Ivar and Ubba. See Corpus Hist. p. 795.

realm, instead of those numerous and nameless Northern pirates, who had gained permanent settlements on the neighbouring coasts and islands, and by weak princes been formally invested with larger districts and places of retreat.

In the year 866 a considerable body of Danes landed in East Anglia, who, having entered into a treaty with the inhabitants, took up their winter-quarters in that country, which possessed but feeble means of defence in a few ill-fortified towns. Having supplied themselves with horses, they proceeded in the following year into Northumbria, where the city of York immediately fell into their power.¹ King Osbriht, who had been expelled in a rebellion, was now recalled by the people, and having laid aside his dissension with Ælle, they with united forces proceeded against the Danes at York. On their arrival the barbarians retired within the city, pursued by the Northumbrians, who broke down the wall and entered the place with them, when the Danes, driven by despair, turned on their pursuers, whom after a great slaughter, including the two kings, they put to flight. So distracted was the state of Northumbria; so completely dissolved was all social order in the kingdom; and the nationality of the people destroyed by the anarchy that had for more than a century prevailed among them, that they were content to enter into a treaty with the pagans; and to receive at their hands a king over Bernicia of the name of Ecgberht, while the main body of their forces remained in the south of Northumbria.² According to an

¹ A.D. 867. Sax. Chron. Annal. Camb.

² Sim. Dunelm. pp. 14, 142, 145. Chron. Mailr. Nor to be wholly overlooked are the Annal. Roskild. ap. Langebek, t. i. p. 374. "Reges Nordhumbroꝝ, Jelle atque Osbertus, ceciderunt;

English tradition, Ælle was not present at the storming of York, but was engaged at the time in hunting, and fell afterwards in an encounter with the Danes.¹ The Danish sagas, on the other hand, relate that Ingvar, after the example of Dido, obtained from Ælle a portion of land as large as a cowhide; and add, with their peculiar love of the horrible, that the Dane caused the ribs of his father's murderer to be detached, his wounds to be rubbed with salt,² and his lungs to be drawn out.

In the following year the Danes invaded the kingdom of Mercia, when, having made themselves masters of the strong town of Nottingham, they took up their winter-quarters there. On the news of this event, the Mercian king Burhred immediately sent to implore the aid of Æthelred and his brother Ælfred, who with a powerful army marched without delay to his succour: but the enemy, not less cautious than daring, shutting themselves up within the walls of the place, refused to engage in a battle. After having vainly endeavoured to dislodge the intruders by siege, the Mercians and their allies were content to allow them to march out

ac Denwolf et Berrwolf de prælio fugerunt." The two last-mentioned are not elsewhere noticed, yet the mention of Osberht, who is known to but few of the chroniclers, indicates a trustworthy source.

¹ Gaimar, v. 2725. Bromton, col. 803.

² Saxo Gram. t. i. p. 463, edit. Møller. *Fragm. Isl. ap. Langebek, t. ii. p. 278.* This diabolical operation was by the Northmen called "*at rista örn á bak einom*" (*to describe an eagle on the back of any one*), from the supposed resemblance of the sufferer to a spread eagle. The chief was generally the perpetrator. Snorre thus describes it: "*ad speciem aquilæ dorsum ita ei laniabat, ut, adacto ad spinam gladio, costisque omnibus ad lumbos usque a tergo divisus, pulmones extraheret.*"—T.

with a vast booty, and to return to Northumberland.¹ They then passed the winter at York; whence, having stayed a twelvemonth, they proceeded through Mercia into East Anglia, and took up their next winter-quarters at Thetford.²

In the narrative of the events which follow, we find for the first time in the Anglo-Saxon annals the names recorded of those Danish leaders, whom the success of their countrymen and friends now called over to England; though our information as to their mutual relationship is very contradictory. Ivar is named as distinguished from Ingvar, and the latter, as well as Uffo, is said to have been a natural son of Regnar Lodbrog.³ Healfdene and Eowils, or Eowulf, are

¹ In a charter of Burhred ap. Ingulph., that prince expresses his thanks to the bishops, abbots and other ecclesiastics, who, waiving their exemption from military service granted them by Æthelwulf, came to his aid on this occasion: . . . “*gratias exolvere speciales omni exercitui meo, maxime tamen viris ecclesiasticis, episcopis et abbatibus, aliis etiam inferioris status et dignitatis, qui, licet piissimæ memoriæ rex quondam Ethelwulphus, pater meus, per sacrati-simam chartam suam, ab omni expeditione militari vos liberos reddiderit, et ab omni servitio seculari penitus absolutos; dignissima tamen miseratione super oppressiones Christianæ plebis, ecclesiarumque, ac monasteriorum destructiones luctuosas benignissime compassi, contra nefandissimos paganos in exercitum Domini prompti et spontanei convenistis,*” etc. This charter is dated from Nottingham, “*anno octingentesimo sexagesimo octavo, Cal. Aug.*” Its genuineness is of course questionable.—T.

² H. Hunt., who alone of all the elder chroniclers mentions Ingvar and Ubba by name, on the occasion of their landing in E. Anglia, says, “*cum suos obsessos et viribus impares Hinguarus videret, vulpeculari astutia verbisque delinitis inducias ab Anglis impetravit.*” He had previously said, “*Hinguar erat ingentis ingenii, Ubba vero fortitudinis admirandæ.*”

³ Lodbrog’s Saga ap. Rafn, *Nordiske Kæmpe-Historier*, B. i. part 3, p. 147. Saxo Gram. t. i. p. 444.

almost unanimously regarded as brothers of Ingvar.¹ As associates of the preceding, though unknown to the Danish tradition,² the English chroniclers make mention of Guthrum, Bagseeg, Hostenius (perhaps Hæsten or Hasting), Oskytel,³ Amund or Hamund, and the two Sidrocs (the elder of whom was probably the individual notorious at an earlier period for his ravages along the Seine),⁴ Osbert, Frene, Harald, and Osbearn.

From accounts, which are painfully attractive, it appears that the defence made by the inhabitants of Lincolnshire against the Northern barbarians was worthy of the reputation for valour enjoyed by the inhabitants of the marsh districts. On St. Maurice's day a victory was gained in Kesteven by the ealdorman Algar, the younger, over an army of Danes, which from York had landed in Lindsey, destroyed the noble and ancient monastery of Bardeney,⁵ and put its inmates to the sword. In this conflict the loss to the Danes was very severe, including three of their kings and only the approach of night saved them from total destruction. It

¹ Thom. Eliensis Vita S. Ethildrithæ, ap. Mabillon, Acta S. S. Bened. t. ii. Sax. Chron. a. 878. Alfr. Bev. Annal. a. 866. According to the common genealogies, the sons of Regnar are Eric, Agnar, Ivar Beenlös, Hvitsærk, Sigurd and Björn Iærnside (Ironside); and in addition to these, we find the names of Ingvar and Ubba, who appear to have been the children of a concubine. In Simeon of Durham the last named, Ubba, is spoken of as Dux Frisiorum.

² The Annal. Roskild. say that Ingvar went "cum novem Aquilonis regibus." They also mention, as Ivar's brothers, Inquar, et Ubi (Ubba), et Björn (Ironside), et Ulf (Eowulf?).

³ Oskytel, as Suhm (ii. p. 409) conjectures, may be that Oskytel or Anscatil, who was a leader of the Northmen at the siege of Paris in 889, and was treacherously slain by Count Odo, after having received baptism. Trithem. Chron. Hirsaug. t. i. p. 40.

⁴ Car. n. Fontan. aa. 842, 845.

⁵ A.D. 869. Ingulph.

was on this night that, unfortunately for the Christians, Guthrum, with the kings and chieftains before mentioned, and accompanied by Ingvar, with a great body of warriors, women and children, arrived in the Danish camp. The intelligence of this event spread such dismay among the followers of Algar, that of eight thousand men, which he had led into the field, scarcely two thousand remained under his banner. Having partaken of the holy Eucharist, the ealdorman arrayed his little band. To Toli, a once renowned warrior, but now a lay brother of Crowland, with whom was associated the valiant Morcar of Brunne, he assigned the command of the right wing; the left he placed under the guidance of Osgod, the ealdorman of Lincoln, with whom was joined Harding of Rehal, with the warriors of Stamford; the command of the centre Algar reserved to himself. Notwithstanding the fury with which the exasperated pagans assailed the small army of Algar, the latter, in wedge-formed array, presented an impenetrable mass, protected by their shields from the arrows of the infantry, and by their spears against the assaults of the cavalry. Evening was drawing nigh, when the Danes, whose arrows were spent and horses fatigued, feigned flight. The impetuosity of the Anglo-Saxons was not to be checked by the remonstrances of their leaders. In disorder they pursued the enemy, who, on perceiving that the Anglo-Saxons had fallen into the snare, and were scattered over the field, turned upon them, and slaughtered them almost without resistance. Algar, Toli, and the other chieftains, posted on an eminence, long continued to withstand the attacks of the Danes, till, bereft of their bravest followers, they fell covered with wounds on the heap of slain.

The Danes now proceeded to Crowland, where they found no resistance, but at the same time no treasures, the abbot Theodore having concealed them in a wall, and sent his monks to seek refuge in the marshes, retaining with him only the most aged and a few children. The pagans burst into the church; the abbot, while performing high mass, was slain at the altar by the hand of their king Oskytel; the other brethren were beheaded, or cruelly tortured by the barbarians, for the purpose of compelling them to discover the treasures of the abbey. After the perpetration of these atrocities, the Danes set fire to the place, which was totally reduced to ashes. But even here the better nature of man could not be entirely suppressed: Thurgar, a comely boy of ten years, had witnessed the murder of the sub-prior Lethwine, and had prayed to share the fate of his master and friend, but the younger jarl Sidroc, pitying his desolate condition, caused him to exchange his cowl for a Danish mantle, and, thus disguised, succeeded in saving him from the general massacre. A few days after, Thurgar made his escape, and to him we are partly indebted for the preceding narrative. From Crowland the Danes proceeded to Medeshamstede (Peterborough), where, finding the gates of the monastery barricaded, they assailed it with their missile engines. On the second assault the place was carried, when Tubba, a brother, as it is said, of Ubba received a dangerous wound from a stone. Exasperated by this event, Ubba slew with his own hand every one clad in the monastic garb. Not one in the whole monastery escaped; the altars and monuments of the dead were overthrown, the extensive library of ecclesiastical books was burnt; a large collection of charters torn to shreds; the walls battered down, and

the church with its appurtenances burnt to the ground. From Medeshamstede the Danes, attended by many waggons loaded with booty, directed their course to Huntingdon,¹ which having plundered, they marched to Ely, in the celebrated abbey of which immense treasures had been deposited from all parts, as in a place of security; these of course became the prey of the pagans, who murdered all whom they found in the abbey, both male and female, and committed the noble structure to the flames.

In the following summer a battle took place between the Danes and Eadmund, king of the East Angles, who, perhaps, seeing himself unsupported by the other Anglo-Saxon princes, or being conscious of the weakness of his own followers, had been withheld from taking the field at an earlier period against the common enemy. Eadmund, who was of the race of the Old-Saxons,² had in the year 855, at the age of fourteen, obtained the crown of East Anglia. King Alemund his father, the husband of Siwara, had, it is said, been designed by Offa as his successor in the kingdom of Mercia, after the death of his childless son Ecgfrith.³ In East Anglia the ealdorman Ulfketul had marched against the Danes, who had established their winter-quarters at Thetford; but in a hard-fought battle, Ulfketul with all his followers was slain. In the winter, after an obstinate conflict, Eadmund himself fell into the hands of Ingvar,⁴ whose proposals that he

¹ See the *Vastatio Monasterii Medeshamstede* in the *Monasticum*, t. i.; also the circumstantial narrative in Langebek, t. ii. p. 52 sq.

² Asser. Fl. W. a. 855. "Ex Antiquorum Saxonum prosapia oriundus."

³ *Legendary Life of St. Eadmund* in Capgrave.

⁴ Sax. Chron. Asser, a. 870.

should renounce the Christian faith, and rule under the supremacy of the Danes, being scornfully rejected, he was most cruelly put to death. Ingvar caused his royal victim to be bound naked to a tree, to be scourged, his limbs to be pierced with arrows, and finally, tired apparently with his unshaken firmness, his head to be struck off. The constancy and calmness of Eadmund amid such torments, in the presence of his barbarous enemies, remind us of the endurance of the North American Indians in similar cases; though the motives and expressions of Eadmund, as they have been transmitted to us from the mouth of a warrior present,¹ place him on a level with the worthiest heroes of the faith, and show him to us as a sacrifice, well deserving to be the high priest and prince of his people, whose saint he soon became. Nor in the long list of royal saints is there one who so long enjoyed an equal degree of veneration throughout Europe.

East Anglia now fell wholly under the dominion of the Danes, and the royal dignity in the country was assumed by Guthrum, one of their kings. Though the southern portion of Northumbria may probably at an earlier period have been under the government of Ubba,² and Bernicia still longer under Danish influence,³ yet East Anglia alone continued for any long

¹ Abbo Floriac. de Vita S. Eadmundi in Actis Sanctor. [Abbo received the account from Dunstan, who had it from Eadmund's sword-bearer. A semi-Saxon version of the narrative, as a homily, is printed in the *Analecta Anglo-Saxonica*, from a Bodleian MS. —T.]

² According to Bromton, p. 807. Ubba remained in Northumbria, yet we have seen that he was at the destruction of Medeshamstede.

³ Even Strathclyde was not spared, the city of Alcluyd having been destroyed by the "black pagans." *Annal. Camb.* 870. *Annal. Ulton.* a. 869.

duration a strictly Danish kingdom, forming at the same time the central point of the settlement of the Danes in England, which only in later times, when East Anglia had again become English, was transferred to Northumbria.

Ingvar, whom the English annalists designate as the most cruel of pagan tyrants, now vanishes for a time from our view,¹ and it is probable that at this time he was turning his arms against the Franks, by whom he was held in equal detestation. While Guthrum was endeavouring to secure his new kingdom, Bagsecg and Healfdene turned their arms against Wessex, the valiant king of which, Æthelred, fought many battles against them, and often proved victorious. In the beginning of March, or earlier, and before a hostile army (according to the usage of warfare in those days) was expected, the Danes surprised the town of Reading, and while some of them made predatory excursions in the neighbourhood, others cast up a rampart between the Thames and the Kennet. Here they were encountered by Æthelwulf, the ealdorman of the district, at Englefield, who, after a long and obstinate conflict, succeeded in routing them with great slaughter, and the loss of one of their jarls. Four days after, Æthelred and his

¹ Adam. Brem. lib. i. Ethelw. a. 870, who calls him Iwar, and adds that he died in the same year; a mistake probably for the Danish king Ivar, who, according to Regnar Lodbrog's Saga (Raft. Nord. Kæmpe-Hist. Bd. i. p. 147), was his brother, and who died in 872. Ingvar appears again in England in 877. According to Wallingford (Gale, t. i. p. 535), whose authority is of little weight, Ingvar was slain by the Northumbrians. It is remarkable that Hermann Corner, in his Chronicle, a. 868, has interpolated the passage, "*Ingvar . . . non diu regnavit, qui propter suam improbitatem a suis interfectus est, non relinquens post se semen.*"

brother Ælfred arrived with an army at Reading, where they destroyed and put to flight all whom they found without the walls; but the pagans sallying forth from every gate, a bloody battle ensued, in which the brave Æthelwulf fell, and which ended in the flight of the Christians. The West Saxons were not blind to the peril which threatened their independence, and after a lapse of four days renewed the contest at Æscesdûn¹ (Ashdown). The Danes divided their army into two bodies, one of which was commanded by their two kings, the other by the jarls. Æthelred and Ælfred divided their forces in like manner. To Æthelred's attachment to the external forms of worship the Danes were very nearly indebted for a new victory, for while he was engaged in prayer in his tent, which he declared he would not leave alive till mass was ended, his brother Ælfred with his division hastened to the conflict; the body under the king's command being destined to act against that under the Danish kings. Æthelred still continuing in prayer, Ælfred had no alternative between a retreat, and an engagement before the forces of his brother were ready to co-operate with him. He did not hesitate, but with resistless force, and regardless of the disadvantage of ground, he attacked and totally defeated the pagans, the greater part of whom were slain, the rest put to flight. Among the slain was the king Bagsecg, the two Sidrocs,² and the jarls Osbearn, Frene and Harald.

¹ A.D. 871. Sax. Chron. Asser.

² According to some MSS. of the Sax. Chron. one of the Sidrocs had already fallen at Englefield, but this is manifestly an error for one of two jarls, who, it is said, had ridden out to plunder, but whose names are not mentioned either by the Chronicle, Asser. or Florence. The Chronicle in recording his death erroneously adds,

The fugitives sought safety in Reading. Fourteen days later another battle was fought at Basing, which ended in favour of the invaders, whose number was now increased by a fresh body of their associates, which had arrived from the North. Two months after, Æthelred and Ælfred fought another battle with the Danes at Merton (Meretûn), where the latter remained in possession of the field. In this battle Heahmund, bishop of Sherborne, was slain. Shortly after these events Æthelred died,¹ after an honourable but unfortunate reign of five years. He was buried at Wimborne, and having died in warfare with pagans, the catholic church has enrolled him among her martyrs. The Danes after their victory over the royal brothers returned to Reading.

"whose name was Sidroc," while Asser and Florence say merely "altero paganorum comite occiso."

¹ A.D. 871, Ap. 23. Fl. W.

CHAPTER IV.

A.D. 871-885.

Childhood and Youth of Ælfred—Treaty with the Danes—Kings of Mercia—Danish Burghs—Danish Invasion of Northumbria—Treaty with Guthrum—Miserable Condition of Wessex—Ælfred compelled to seek Safety in the Woods of Somerset—Raises Fortifications at Athelney—Treaty with Guthrum—Æthelstan—Victory over Northmen—Rollo.

AFTER the death of Æthelred, the undivided wish of the nation called to the throne his youngest brother Ælfred, who had just attained his twenty-second year. Though from an early period he had been destined by his father to hold the reins of government, and with that view had been sent to Rome to receive unction at the hands of the pope, yet his youth, at the time of his father's death, together with the inquietudes during the last years of his reign, must have hindered the completion of plans which, under all circumstances, could only have been founded on monastic vows, or some settlement and voluntary renunciation on the part of his brothers. Under the reigns of his brothers he was designated *Secundarius*,¹ or second regent, a denomination referring

¹ In charters of 866 and 867 Æthelred styles himself "*Rex Occidentalium Saxonum et Cantuariorum*," while Ælfred is by Asser repeatedly called "*Secundarius*:" as under a. 868. "*Ælfred rex, secundarii tamen tunc ordine fretus.*" a. 871. "*Ælfred tunc secundarius.*"—"Ælfred, qui usque ad id temporis, viventibus fratribus suis, secundarius fuerat."

more probably to a limited joint authority over the whole realm, than to his government of Kent and the adjacent provinces. By his intellectual endowments, and that distinguished valour which had saved the country in the memorable battle of Ashdown, he had gained the undivided affection of the people, so that, had he possessed the will, the assumption of the reins of government would have been no task of difficulty to him. So far was he, however, from cherishing the desire of undivided sway, that after having reigned almost by compulsion during a month, he distrusted his ability to withstand alone the calamities inflicted on his country by the Northern pagans, unless aided by divine Providence. But he had now entered on a course which led him to a glory seldom attained, and never eclipsed. His was the double happiness of freeing his oppressed people from the yoke of hated pagan foreigners, and of restoring to them their faith as well as the enjoyment of their ancient manners and well-preserved usages, and, at the same time, of leading them towards the new dawn of civic development and national culture, the rays of which, though often strongly refracted, illumine, at the present day, the greater portion of the habitable world. The extreme misery and the deep humiliation which at one time overwhelmed him and his people, have served only as a foil to his glory, or, what is yet better, as a deeper foundation to the gratitude of the people towards him who gave them back their freedom, and infused new life among them. The excessive veneration of early, and the eloquence of later times may have heaped praises on the head of Ælfred, which criticism must now retract, by showing that the germ of many an institution ascribed to him existed at an earlier period, both among

his own people and others of kindred race. On the other hand, the clear unprejudiced eye of the same criticism, following the untroubled springs of contemporary and credible history, perceives, on further research, always new reasons for acknowledging Ælfred as the mirror of kings and the hero of European civilization.

The childhood and the youth of Ælfred offer a wonderful prelude to the serious drama of his maturer years. To the ruler of England, already gifted with three vigorous sons, a child was born of his consort Osburh, at Waneting (Wantage), in the year 848-849, who by his beauty and sweetness of temper, and, at a later period, by his understanding and energy, drew on him all the affection of his parents. At a time when the kingdom was assailed on every side by ever-increasing swarms of most formidable enemies, and when these sons, already arrived at the age of manhood, appeared to promise firm security for the preservation of the state, the plan was devised and fostered by their parents of transferring, in violation of the laws, and to the endangering of the existence of the kingdom, the splendour and power of the crown to their beloved last-born child. For the attainment of such a wish no means appear hazardous, no course perilous. The babe of five years is committed to the ocean in the frail Saxon bark, and conveyed, through the territories of doubtful friends, over the icy ridges of the Alps to Rome. The holy father is solicited to bestow the blessing of unction on the stranger child, and, without a thought of the consequences, confers on him the greatest gift of Christianity. The anointed boy returns to the land of his fathers, and, a few years afterwards, performs the same journey with the same security.

Ælfred excelled in personal comeliness and strength. As a hunter he was unrivalled; his mental talents were also of equal excellence; but, owing to the heedlessness of his parents, he had passed his twelfth year before any literary instruction was bestowed on him, though his memory was stored with those Saxon poems which, both by day and night, he had eagerly learned from the recital of others. To the following interesting occurrence is to be ascribed that ardent love of learning, for which in his maturer years he was so gloriously distinguished above his unlettered countrymen and contemporaries. It happened one day that his mother showed to Ælfred and his brothers a volume of Saxon poetry, which she was holding in her hand, saying, "Whichever of you can first learn this book shall have it as a gift." Struck by the beautifully illuminated initial, Ælfred asked her, whether she would really give the book to him who could first understand and repeat it, and on her assuring him that she would, he straightway carried it off, betook himself to his master, read it, brought it back to his mother, and recited it.

From his infancy Ælfred had been afflicted with a painful disease, from which he had, however, been relieved on prayer to the Almighty in a church in Cornwall. In his twentieth year he espoused Ealhswith, the daughter of Æthelred, surnamed Mucil, ealdorman of the Gainas in Lincolnshire, and of the noble Eadburh of the royal house of Mercia. In the midst of the festivities, which lasted for several days, he was seized with a malady different from the first, the nature of which was unknown to all the physicians of the time, and from which, it is said, he enjoyed scarcely a day's respite during more than twenty years of his useful and

active life.¹ But Ælfred, by the vigour of his mind, and the power of his will, was able to repress the irritability of his body, and the increasing malady seemed only to have strengthened his mental energy. Notwithstanding his bodily sufferings, he was enabled in his younger years to execute what has already been related, and after his father had resigned the crown of Wessex, and renounced his plans with regard to him—after his three brothers had in succession ascended the throne and died a natural death, two of them childless, the third leaving two sons minors—the royal dignity was in a manner forced upon Ælfred, who had scarcely attained his twenty-second year. Had all this been imparted to us by any other hand than that of the venerable and highly credible bishop Asser, the contemporary and friend of Ælfred, who wrote his biography during the life of that prince, we should undoubtedly have been justified in withholding our belief in the narrative.

The first event in the reign of Ælfred gives us to understand how difficult the circumstances were under which he commenced it. Immediately after the battle of Merton a strong body of Northmen, who had recently landed, arrived at Reading,² and joined the Danish army quartered at that place, whence the united forces penetrated to Wilton, where they occupied a hill on

¹ Fl. W. Chron. and Geneal. Asser, a. 868. "Ficus . . . quod genus infestissimi doloris etiam ab infantia habuit; sed cum Cornubiam venandi causa adiret, et ad quandam ecclesiam orandi causa divertisset, in qua S. Gueryr requiescit, et nunc etiam S. Neotus ibidem pausat, sublevatus est," etc.—T.

² Sax. Chron. a. 871, "micel sumor-lida com to Readingum," which Ethelwerd renders, "advenit sine numero æstivus exercitus in loco Readingon." [The passage has undergone divers translations, but that of Ethelwerd is undoubtedly right.—T.]

the south bank of the river Willy. Here Ælfred, who had been paying the last duties to his brother at Wimborne,¹ ventured with inferior numbers to engage them, and in the long and obstinate conflict which ensued, the valour of the Saxons would have prevailed over the ferocity of the enemy, had not the latter, availing themselves of their old stratagem, feigned flight, rallying from which they in turn became the assailants, and remained masters of the field. In eight great battles² and numberless irruptions, the Saxons had, in the course of little more than a year, lost a vast number of their people; on the side of the pagans also, one king and nine jarls had perished;³ both parties, therefore, having had enough of warfare, concluded a peace, according to the conditions of which the Danes evacuated the territory of the West Saxons. In this treaty Mercia was not included, since we find that Healfdene with his hordes directed his course to London, where the Danes passed the winter.⁴ In the same year Burhred king of Mercia, having made peace with the invaders, on condition of paying them tribute,⁵ they left London, and proceeded to Northumbria, where they reinstated king Ecgberht, who had been expelled by the people, but took up their winter-quarters at Turces-ige (Torksey in the Mercian province of Lindsey), where Burhred had either appropriated to himself, or divided among his followers, the rich

¹ Ethelwerd, a. 871.

² So Asser, and also Ethelwerd, "*certamina tria, excepto supra memoratis bellis,*" viz. at Englefield, Reading, Ashdown, Merton and Wilton. All the MSS. of the Sax. Chron. read *nine*.

³ Sax. Chron. Asser, Ethelwerd has *eleven*.

⁴ Sax. Chron. Asser, a. 872.

⁵ Ethelwerd, a. 872. "*Myrcii confirmant cum eis fœderis pactum stipendiaque statuunt.*"

possessions of the abbey of Bardeney, as well as of other religious foundations which had been destroyed by the Danes.¹ Burhred here entered into a new treaty with the pagans, wherein he made a still greater display of weakness, profiting by which, and in mockery of all their promises, they in the following year entered the south of Mercia, and wintered at Hrependûn (Repton) in Derbyshire, where they destroyed the celebrated monastery, the hallowed burial-place of the kings of Mercia. Burhred, after a disastrous reign of twenty-two years, seeing all England a prey to the barbarians, hopeless of victory, and overwhelmed with so many afflictions, abandoned his throne and kingdom and proceeded to Rome, where he died a few days after his arrival, and was buried in the church of St. Mary belonging to the Saxon School.² His queen Æthelswith, the sister of Ælfred, who had followed the footsteps of her consort towards the holy city, was not permitted to join him, but died on the way, and was buried at Ticino.³

Notwithstanding their power, the Danes were not, it seems, desirous of exercising direct sway in Mercia, but preferred the exaction of tribute from that unhappy kingdom by means of a subordinate agent, for which object (following the course they had adopted in Northumbria) they set up a servant of the late king, named Ceolwulf,⁴ who, under the title of king, should levy the contributions, but should resign his dignity whenever required by his masters to do so: for the fulfilling of which condition he gave hostages, at the same time swearing obedience to them in all things. The exactions levied by this traitor, who knew the means of

¹ Ingulph.

² Ingulf.

³ Sax. Chron. Asser, a. 874.

⁴ Sax. Chron. a. 874.

exhausting his countrymen better than the barbarians, gained for his name the execration of widows and of orphans, and of the few cultivators of the soil, and traders who still remained in the land. The monks especially were put to numerous torments, on account of their supposed knowledge of the treasures belonging to their monasteries. The abbey of Crowland, which had so lately suffered by the Danes, was charged with the enormous contribution of a thousand pounds, which almost annihilated it. But, after a few years, the Danes, discovering probably that Ceolwulf was no more faithful to them than he had been to his former master, displaced him, and, having stripped him to his last garment, left him to die in misery.¹ A part of the land had now for some time been occupied by the Danes, who took possession of several of the larger towns, in which they formed permanent settlements. These places long continued to be distinguished by the name of the Danish Burghs, and were also, with reference to their having originally consisted of Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby (Deora-by, the name given by the Danes to the Saxon Northweorthig),² Leicester and Stamford, called the 'Five,' or, including York and Chester, the 'Seven Towns.' The Five-burghers had a court of justice and many other institutions in common, though they may not have originated, like the civic confederations of the continent, in a similarity of cir-

¹ From the Chronicle it appears, that in 877 the Danes had appropriated to themselves a part of Mercia, leaving the rest under the nominal government of Ceolwulf.—T.

² Streoneshealh also received from the Danes its present name of Whitby; and in general all the districts in England occupied by them are distinguished by places bearing names ending in 'by,' i. e. *city, town*.

cumstances, but are rather perhaps to be attributed to a relationship of race and blood.¹

The Northmen were in the meanwhile roaming over the country like pirates on the ocean. Healfdene advanced with his army from Repton into Northumbria and took up his winter-quarters on the Tyne.² Here the work of devastation was carried to the utmost. Tynemouth was reduced to a heap of ruins, and the abbeys of Lindisfarne and Coldingham burnt to the ground.³ In this kingdom Ecgberht was dead⁴ and had been succeeded by another tool of the Danes, named Ricsig, who died three years after, and was followed by a second Ecgberht.⁵ All Northumbria was now under the dominion of the Danes, who made frequent inroads into Pictland and Strathclyde. But even here the necessity of cultivating the desolated fields, and the all-powerful delight of possession, brought many Danes to become permanent settlers, and the hands which till then had skilfully wielded only the oar and the spear, gradually learned the use of the plough and the harrow. Cumberland appears to have particularly suffered in these invasions, Carlisle and other towns having been entirely destroyed, and only rebuilt about two centuries later by the Normans.⁶

¹ Asser, aa. 874-877. Laws of Æthelred III. Palgrave, ii. p. cxcv.

² Sax. Chron. a. 875.

³ Sim. Dunelm. a. 875. "Eardulfus episcopus et abbas Eadredus de Lindisfarnensi insula corpus S. Cuthberti tollentes, per ix. annos ante faciem barbarorum de loco ad locum fugientes, cum illo thesauro discurrerunt." To escape insult from these merciless barbarians, the nuns of Coldingham are said to have mutilated their faces; certain it is that they perished in the conflagration of their convent. See also Asser. Matt. Westm.—T.

⁴ Sim. Dunelm. Hist. alia, a. 873.

⁵ Ibid. a. 876.

⁶ Sim. Dunelm. a. 1092.

While Healfdene was exercising his followers in the arts of war and peace, the kings Guthrum, Oskytel and Amund, having broken up their quarters at Repton, marched to Cambridge, and there passed the winter. In the following year, however, they suddenly abandoned the place by night, embarked, and, sailing westward, landed on the coast of Dorsetshire, where they surprised the strong town of Wareham,¹ the position of which on the British Channel was equally favourable for inroads into Wessex and marauding expeditions on the opposite coast of France. Ælfred, although in the preceding year he had been victorious in a sea-fight against seven Danish ships,² one of which he had captured, deemed it advisable to conclude a treaty with the enemy, by which, on receipt of a sum of money, they promised to evacuate Wessex, and for the fulfilling of which they gave as many chosen hostages as he demanded, and swore on all those relics,³ in the efficacy of which the king placed the greatest trust, and also on the holy ring or bracelet⁴ (an oath which they had never before sworn to any people), that they would without delay withdraw from his territory. But those whom their word had

¹ Sax. Chron. Asser, a. 876.

² So Sax. Chron. Ethelw. a. 875. Asser, *Annal. H. Hunt.*, while Asser, *Vita Ælfr. and Florence* give six only as the number of ships.

³ We ought not perhaps to smile at Ælfred's credulity on this occasion, but rather infer that the bones of the dead were held in similar veneration among the Northern people.

⁴ The ceremony here noticed may be illustrated by the following passage from Arngrim Jonas, *Rer. Island. i. 7*. "In ara præterea annulus asservabatur argenteus vel ex orichalcho, unciarum xx., quem forensi aliquo munere fungentes, jusjurandum jam præstituri, victimarum illinitum cruore, religiose inter jurandum contrectabant." See also Bartholinus de armillis, p. 101.—Petrie in *C. H.* p. 355, *note*.—T.

never bound were not to be shackled by hostages or an oath. One night, a part of their army surprised and massacred the Saxon cavalry, when those who were mounted directed their course to Exeter, of which they took possession, and there passed the winter.

Exeter and Wareham now formed points of attraction for the Northmen, who streamed in from every side, and threatened destruction to the independence of the rest of Wessex. To provide more effectually against future landings of these barbarians, Ælfred caused ships to be built on all the coasts, of larger dimensions than any previously known. These he manned chiefly with pirates,¹ to whom he committed the guardianship of the coasts. He then hastened to Exeter, to which he laid siege, having previously forbidden his sailors to allow any provisions to be supplied to the enemy. His new fleet soon proved its efficacy. A hundred and twenty ships—a large hundred in the language of that day—with a reinforcement of Danish warriors, had been detained a whole month at sea, and had suffered severely from storms, without being able to reach their destination in Wessex. At Swanwick they fell in with the fleet of Ælfred, by which they were vigorously attacked and destroyed.² This event facilitated the conclusion of a treaty with the sea-kings at Exeter, who, in the following year, actually evacuated that city, and proceeded to Gloucester:³ but other swarms of Danes had in the meanwhile gained possession of London and

¹ Asser, a. 877. “*Impositisque piratis in illis vias maris custodiendas commisit.*”

² I have preferred the account of this battle given by Asser in his *Life of Ælfred*, though differing in some points from that in the *Chronicle*, Asser's *Annals* and *Florence*.—T.

³ Ethelwerd is here more definite than the other authorities, which speak only of Mercia.

the East Saxon territory,¹ so that there remained only the country south of the Thames that was not in the power of the Danes. At this time a brother of Ingvar and Healfdene, perhaps Ubba,² took up his winter-quarters in Dimetia (South Wales); and about the same time the celebrated Hrolf or Rollo is said to have passed a winter in Britain.³ It might therefore have been in consequence of an agreement between Ubba and the vikings at Gloucester, that, in the following year, an attack from all sides was made on Wessex, when Guthrum's army from Gloucester burst into the territory of the Wilsætas, and took the royal town of Chippenham on the Avon, from which station they sent forth detachments, and succeeded in occupying the country.

In the same year the brother of Ingvar and Healfdene, with twenty-three ships, sailed from South Wales (where he had destroyed many people and committed dreadful ravages) to Devonshire, and was there, with twelve hundred of his men, slain before the fortress of Cynwith, into which many faithful adherents of the

¹ H. Hunt. a. 878.

² Asser, a. 878, says only, "*frater Hynguari et Healfdenæ.*" So also Sax. Chron. and Fl. W.; H. Hunt. has "*frater Haldene.*" Ethelwerd "*Advectus est Healfdene [et] Iguuaris tyranni frater.*" Simeon, Chron. Mailr., Hoveden and others make Ingvar and Healfdene both land. Spelman, *Ælfr. Vita*, here very confidently names Ubba. Bromton and others, who mention Ubba in this year, say that he had fallen at Chippenham, where his memory is preserved by a mound called Ubbelow. According to the Chron. Turon., Rollo went to England in the first year of the reign of Charles le Gros, i. e. in 877-878. See Du Chesne, *Scriptt. Norman.* p. 26. Guido's account, in Albericus, a. 880, that Lodbrog's son Björn, with his tutor Hasting, came to England about this time, and fought against Ælfred, cannot be regarded as chronologically correct.

³ Asser, a. 876. "*Idem Normannorum dux Rollo, cum in antiqua Britannia sive Anglia hyemaret,*" etc. See above, note.²—T.

king had retired.¹ The Danes, sensible that the place was unprovided with the means of a long defence, as it was surrounded merely by a wall after the manner of those times, made no attempt to force an entrance on account of its position, which rendered it secure on all sides, excepting the east; but they blockaded it, under the persuasion, that the garrison, compelled by hunger and want of water, would speedily yield. The event did not correspond with their expectation, for the Saxons, resolved either to conquer, or die with arms in their hands, sallied out at dawn and assailed the enemy, the greater number of whom, including their king, they put to the sword,² a few only escaping to their ships. Among the spoil taken by the Saxons was the famous banner of the Raven, said to have been woven in one day by the sisters of Ingvar and Ubba, and to have possessed the property of appearing before every battle flying like a living bird if the Danes were to be victorious; while in the contrary event, it hung down motionless.³

Notwithstanding this partial success, the condition of Wessex was truly deplorable. The Danes had penetrated so far into the northern parts, and devastated the country so cruelly, that the district of the brave Sumorsætas alone remained free from their ravages. On many of his subjects, particularly those of British race, Ælfred could place no reliance, and many of the natives, driven by fear and want, had fled beyond sea,

¹ Ethelwerd alone names Odda as the leader of those who had retired to Cynwith, and adds, against all the other authorities, "*Postremo victoriæ obtinent locum etiam Dani.*"

² Asser says that twelve hundred were slain, while the Chronicle and H. Hunt. mention eight hundred and forty as the number.

³ Asser, a. 878. *Encom. Emmæ*, ed. Maseres, p. 16, and ap. Langebek, t. v. p. 485.

while others preferred subjection to the barbarous pagans, and not only forsook, but even rebelled against the steadfast king.¹ Had a hostile spear at that time pierced him, had his noble heart been capable of quailing, of prompting him to a weak desperate sacrifice, or of allowing him to seek safety among his continental kindred, both the royal race and freedom would have been extinguished in England, and the country—turned into a desert—would have fallen a prey to the Northern pirates!

With a few of his nobles, warriors and vassals, among whom is named Æthelnoth,² the ealdorman of the Sumorsætas, the king, forsaken by and separated from his people, passed some months during the winter, in the cottage of one of his cowherds, among the woods and marshes of Somersetshire, where subsistence for himself and his followers was only to be obtained, either by force or stratagem, from the pagans, or from the Christians under their subjection. At a later period, Ælfred, it is said, found pleasure in recounting to his friends this dark portion of his history.³

¹ This defection, however confidently to be inferred from given circumstances, is expressly alluded to only at a later period by Ethelwerd, a. 886: "Ælfredo . . . quem ingenio, quem occursu non superaverat civilis discordia sæva, hunc ut redemptorem susceperere cuncti," etc.

² Asser's words, "*cum paucis suis nobilibus, et etiam cum quibusdam militibus et vasallis . . . in magna tribulatione inquietam vitam ducebat,*" have been overlooked by those who describe Ælfred as wandering about among the most wretched hovels. Æthelnoth is here mentioned only by Ethelwerd, and is, without doubt, the ealdorman of that name who in 894 fought in the same neighbourhood. See Sax. Chron. Ethelw.

³ An extract from Asser's Annals inserted into some MSS. of his Life of Ælfred contains the well-known story, that Ælfred was one day sitting by the fire in the cowherd's hut, preparing a bow and

A few weeks afterwards, about Easter, the king, with the aid of the faithful nobles of the Sumorsætas, was enabled to raise a fortress in a place defended by a morass and forest, which long after bore the name of Æthelinga-eig, contracted into Athelney (the Isle of Princes). It lay nearer to Somerton than to Taunton, to the east of the Parret, at the confluence of that river with the Thone, and is known to the modern world not only by tradition, but is also indicated by a golden enameled ornament found there, exhibiting the name of Ælfred.¹ From this retreat incessant incursions were made on the enemy, and new connections formed. Ælfred's own activity, courage and craft are shown to us in the account, that availing himself of his skill in poetry and music, he went disguised as a harper into the Danish camp, and while there ascertained their position, number and state of preparation.² After a space of seven months he was enabled, on an appointed day, to gather round him his faithful followers from the shires of Hampton, Wilts and Somerset, at Ecgberhtes-

arrows and other warlike implements, while his hostess (who knew not the rank of her guest) was busied in making bread, and who, on seeing that the loaves on the hearth were beginning to burn, ran and removed them, saying to the king, "Though you neglect to turn them when you see them burning, you are ready enough to eat them when hot." This anecdote, derived originally from an anonymous Life of St. Neot, does not appear in Florence of Worcester, though it may have been one of those related by Ælfred himself.

¹ Now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. See the engraving in Hicks, t. i. p. 142. The inscription (*Ælfred het meh gewircan — Ælfred commanded me to be wrought*) proves it to have been made in England. By Asser we are informed that Ælfred much encouraged goldsmiths.

² W. Malm., also Guido ap. Alberic. a. 880.

tan (Brixton), on the east of Selwood forest, which stretches from the east of Somerset to Devonshire, and was at that time of vast extent, but which now, like many spacious woody tracts, with which England, as late as the thirteenth century, was covered, is scarcely to be traced even by the antiquary. Here the king was received by his faithful people with the liveliest demonstrations of joy and affection. On the following day he removed his camp to Eglea,¹ and thence, on the next morning, to Ethandûn,² where he met the chief forces of the Danes, who, it appears, were apprised of his advance, and did not hesitate to engage in conflict with the Saxons fighting for country and freedom. After an obstinate resistance and great slaughter, the Danes gave way, and betook themselves to flight. Ælfred pursued them to their fastness, before which he encamped, and laid siege to those who had escaped the sword of vengeance. After a lapse of fourteen days, the besieged, worn out with hunger, cold and fear, solicited a cessation of arms, offering to give as many hostages as Ælfred might require, to demand none from him, and to quit the kingdom as speedily as possible. These conditions were accepted and speedily fulfilled. A consequence not the least important of this victory was, that Guthrum formed the resolution of embracing Christianity, and thereby facilitated the removal of the hostile contrast between the older inhabitants and the Scandinavian settlers on the island. Seven weeks afterwards, Guthrum, with thirty of his chief officers, was baptized at Alre (Aller) near Athelney, and re-

¹ See the map in Ingram's edit. of the Chronicle.

² Perhaps Eddington, near Westbury. Whitaker (*Life of St. Neot*, p. 268) supposes it to be Yatton, about five miles N.W. of Chippenham.—T.

ceived the name of Æthelstan, while Æthelnod, the earl of the Somersetas, performed the solemn duties of bath-attendant. Ælfred was his sponsor, and raised him from the holy font. On the eighth day the chrysmal fillet was unbound at Wedmore, and, after having stayed twelve days with Ælfred, he returned to his people loaded with costly gifts.¹

The Danish warriors now left Wessex and proceeded to Cirencester, in the territory of the Hwiccas, where they remained a year, in the course of which a new army of Danes arrived in the Thames, but ascended no higher than Fulham, where they continued during the winter. In the following year they crossed over to Belgium, and passed another year at Ghent. The leader of this body was Hasting,² a name formidable

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 878, "he hine miclum and his geferan mid feo weorðode." Asser, Fl. W., "multa et optima ædificia (beneficia?) largiter dedit."

² Asser, aa. 879-881. W. Malm. Elinand ap. Alberic, a. 880, almost in the words of Malmesbury. Annal. Vedast. Hinemar. a. 882. The chronology of the earlier deeds of Hasting rests chiefly on the Chronicon Turonense. ap. Du Chesne, Scriptt. Rer. Norman. (a work rarely named by modern writers), according to which he came as early as 841 (not 851, according to Guil. Gemmet.) with Björn to France. The years 856 and 858 in the said work are to be compared with Prudent. Trecens. aa. 857 and 858, where the treaty which, according to Prudent., Hasting concluded with Charles the Bald, is here referred to Björn. The expedition to Luna in Chron. Turon. becomes much more probable through Prudent. a. 859, who says that the Danes already occupied the isle of La Camargue and the mouth of the Rhone, whence the transit to the Gulf of Spezzia was very easy. The passage in Hinemar. Rhemes. a. 866 (whence Chr. Norm. a. 869), where "pagus Italiæ" is excellently corrected by Pertz to "Pagus Isaliæ (Yssel)," cannot be referred to Hasting. Cf. also Rhigino, aa. 867, 874. Gesta Domin. Ambazian. a. 877, ap. Du Chesne, p. 24, with the course of our narrative. After this comparison it will be scarcely necessary to mention that we acknowledge but one historic Hasting, believing

both to the north and south of Europe, and through whom the predatory expeditions of the Northmen have supplied the history of Europe in that century with a sad connecting link, and a terrific unity. The common interest in these expeditions declares itself in the short contemporary annals of England, which record the most important wanderings of the Northmen in Belgium and the north of France, even when they mention nothing of their own country. It is, for instance, related that, after a battle with the Franks, in the year 881, in which may be recognised that of Saucourt, the Northmen took possession of the horses left on the field, and thus converted themselves into cavalry. Their expeditions up the Maes and Scheldt are also related, as well as their stay at the monastery of Condé;¹ nor is the battle of Haslo² omitted. After these events, the wanderings of that restless and destructive people bring them again to Britain.

Having stayed a year at Cirencester, Guthrum withdrew into East Anglia,³ which had already been fourteen years in the possession of the Danes. It was probably in consequence of the previous agreement with Ælfred, that Guthrum now divided this province entirely among his followers, and governed the country as a

this view to be better founded than Suhm's confused mass of citations would lead one to suppose.

¹ Sax. Chron. aa. 880-883. Asser.

² "Escelun:" Ethelw. a. 882. This date accords with the Annal. Vedastini and other Frankish accounts. The wintering at Ghent and Condé, in 880 and 883 according to the English accounts, is in the Annal. Vedast. placed a year earlier, which agrees with Hincmar. a. 880 ("Normannos in Ganto residentes") and Annal. Fuldens. a. 880 ("Nordmannos qui in Scalta fluvio longo tempore residebant").

³ Sax. Chron. a. 880.

kingdom under the suzerainty of Wessex.¹ The treaty, still extant, which Ælfred and all the witan of English race concluded with Guthrum and all the people dwelling in East Anglia, defines the boundaries of the country, viz. the Thames, the Lea to its source, then to the right as far as Bedford, and thence up the Ouse to the Watling Street. The other provisions agreed on by the two nations acknowledge, by fixing the same wergild, a perfect legal equality between them, and regulate commercial intercourse, as well as judicial proceedings in disputes arising between the English and Danes. The provisions are remarkable, and, by their contingent prohibition, show that Englishmen both free and servile were in the habit of passing over to the Danish army. Many examples even occur of Christian fugitives who sought aid from the Northmen against their own countrymen, and we meet with a very remarkable one at this time in the case of Isembard, seigneur of La Ferté in Ponthieu, who having had a quarrel with his mother's brother king Louis, the son of Louis the Stammerer, had renounced his faith and fled to Guthrum, and been received with welcome, before the latter became a convert to Christianity. He accompanied him on his expeditions in England, and conducted him—the treaty with Ælfred having afforded him leisure but no quiet—back to his country, where, after many devastations, and the burning of the rich abbey of St. Riquier on the Somme, they were driven back at

¹ W. Malm. ii. 4. Gorm the Englishman, who about this time is mentioned under the name of Gormo in Saxo Gram., and in Eric's Chronicle is reckoned among the Danish kings, may be the same individual; though it must not be overlooked that Gormo is said to have been born in England, and that his father Frothi had already conquered England and been baptized there.

Saucourt in the district of Vimeu¹ by king Louis the Third.²

In a confirmation of the treaty before-mentioned, by the successors of Ælfred and Guthrum, another enactment of both kings is found, which shows that Christianity was already regarded as the state religion of the Danish people in England, a fact which is also proved by the continuance of the spiritual dignities in the Danish territory. This enactment contains a series of penal laws for the preservation of the essential ordinances both of the church and the state, which, among both people, mutually contributed to the preservation of order and usages; and for the maintenance of their common guardianship, by dividing the temporal mulcts between them. The conception of uniting with his own people, in one church and by one law, the foreigners whose expulsion from the country was, through the fault of the preceding century, no longer practicable, proves to us the far-sighted capacity of Ælfred.

England during this year enjoyed a degree of peace to which it had long been a stranger, and was only in isolated parts disturbed by the Northmen. Ælfred anxiously exerted himself for the protection of the

¹ This battle is especially known to the Germans through the song of triumph written on the occasion, which has been repeatedly printed. That the German tongue was not at that time banished from Neustria, and how, at a later period, the boundary between Germans and French was formed, we have briefly shown in the before-mentioned Review of Depping.

² The chief authority is the precentor Guy de Bazoché, whom we know only from extracts in Alberic. See Alberici Chron. a. 881. Guthrum is here called Guormund, as in the passage previously extracted from Malmesbury. The Chron. S. Richarii ap. Bouquet, t. viii. p. 273, calls him Guaramund, and makes him fall at Saucourt.

coasts, and by his vigilance repelled many an attack upon his country. In the year 882 Louis the Third of France, shortly before his death, concluded a treaty with Hasting, who with his fleet had held the Loire in a state of blockade.¹ The Northmen, having left that neighbourhood, meditated a landing in Wessex, but Ælfred met them with a fleet and gained a complete victory. Two of the enemy's ships were taken, the entire crews of which were slain, and the commanders of two others, having laid down their arms, exhausted with exertion and wounds, on their knees implored mercy, and surrendered themselves and their men to the victor. In the same year, Hasting fought in the celebrated battle of Haslo against the emperor Charles, while England continued for some time free from these dangerous guests, who had spread themselves along the Scheldt and the Rhine, where they suffered great defeats at Norden in East Friesland, and, as we have seen, at Saucourt. In the year 884 the Northmen deemed it advisable to leave for a while these plundered districts, and to seek others, in which the field of booty had for some years lain fallow. The army was accordingly divided into two bodies, one of which proceeded to Louvain, the other, accompanied by many horses, crossed the British Channel from Boulogne, and landed in Kent.² Here they laid siege to Rochester,

¹ *Annal. Vedast.* a. 882. "Hludowicus vero rex Ligerim petiit, Nordmannos volens e regno suo ejicere, atque Alstingum in amicitiam recipere, quod et fecit." *Hincmar. Ihem. h. a.*, "Hastingus et complices illius Nordmanni ex Ligeri egressi, maritimas partes petierunt." Depping has overlooked this negotiation. As we know that Hasting or Alsting was in this movement, we may with the less scruple recognise him as the king of the Northmen, Hals, who in this year was present at the battle of Haslo. See *Annal. Fuldens.*

² *Sax. Chron., Ethelw. a. 885, Asser a. 884*, allude to the expedi-

opposite to which city they erected a fort ; but the inhabitants defended themselves bravely and successfully, till Ælfred was enabled to collect an army and come to the relief of the besieged, when the enemy fled to their ships, and for the most part went to foreign countries. Some of them (if credit may be given to the inflated narrative of the æthling Ethelwerd) proceeded to the northern bank of the Thames, where they stationed themselves at Beamfleet (Benfleet) in Essex, and made predatory excursions, being supported by the people of East Anglia, who had also neglected to supply substitutes for such hostages as had died or been released.¹ Ælfred therefore sent his ships well manned to the territory of the faithless ruler of East Anglia, on the coast of which, at Stourmouth, they captured sixteen vessels of the vikings with all their treasure and slew the crews. But as Ælfred's ships, on their return, were leaving the mouth of the river, they were assailed on all sides by a fleet collected in haste by the inhabitants, and overcome. Notwithstanding this misfortune, Ælfred soon re-established his feudal superiority in East Anglia, and it even appears that he would have driven Guthrum-Æthelstan from the country, had not the latter received timely help from Rollo, the future

tion to Louvain. Annal. Vedast. a. 884, "Dani Bononiam veniunt ; pars illorum transit mare, atque pars Luvaniam," etc.

¹ Attention is due to a neglected passage of Ethelwerd, a. 885. It, at all events, explains to us the following expedition against the East Anglians, for which, in the other authorities, we find no cause, unless we understand as such the words of Asser, "*prædandi causa*," which would stigmatize Ælfred as a pirate, or, more justly perhaps, unless we suppose the notice contained in the Chronicle at the close of 885 and Asser, 884, *That the army in East Anglia had broken the peace*, to be identical with the amplified account in Ethelwerd.

first duke of Normandy. This chieftain, the exiled son of Rögnvald, jarl of Möere, had come to England in the year 875, immediately after the battle of Hafursfjord, which had reduced all the petty kings of Norway under the subjection of king Harald Harfagr, had entered into a friendly intercourse with Guthrum, and, as the saga tells us, had, in consequence of a significant dream, betaken himself to the banks of the Seine.¹ He had withdrawn from the siege of Paris, at the period of Ælfred's attack on Guthrum, for the purpose of aiding the latter, in which he so fully succeeded, that Guthrum made him the offer of the half of his kingdom, but this Rollo declined, as well as his invitation to adopt the Christian faith.

In this manner we explain the extraordinary account of the later historians, that Rollo was in alliance with king Ælfred, and, for the purpose of saving him, had hastened from the gates of Paris. The oldest historian of Normandy, Dudo of St. Quentin, relates that these transactions took place between Rollo and Alstenius or Æthelstan king of the Angles.² Under this name the grandson of Ælfred had been understood by the followers of Dudo, perhaps even by Dudo himself, and afterwards by an uncritical writer, John Wallingford, who has made the remark, that, as this Æthelstan lived later than Rollo, he must have been confounded with

¹ In Asser, V. A., a circumstantial account is given of this dream, which is, however, a mere interpolation from the so-called Asserii Annales. Florence and later MSS. of the Chronicle mention only the arrival of Rollo in Normandy. The story of the dream is derived from Norman traditions in Dudo of St. Quentin.

² Dudo. Will. of Jumièges. Roman de Rou, v. 1364. In Dudo, p. 78, it is remarkable that he calls the enemies of Alstan, king of the Angli, also *Anglos*. See also Malmesb. de Gestis Pont. ap. Gale, t. i. p. 363.

Ælfred,¹ which supposition has been the cause of serious difficulties. But if we call to mind that Guthrum at his baptism assumed the name of Æthelstan, and must have been known under that name to the Norman ecclesiastical writers, the riddle is simply and satisfactorily solved, and we again see how a distorted tradition may contain a valuable historic fact.

¹ This passage of Wallingford (ap. Gale, t. i. p. 214) is found under the reign of Æthelstan; "Reservavit ad istum regem quod superius dixi de Ealfredo et Rollone scriptor Historiæ Normanorum (*sc.* W. of Jumièges, lib. ii. c. 4, from Dudo), quod nequaquam stare potest, cum Rollo usque ad Ealstani regnum ex ipso ejus volumine et chronicorum supputatione convinci possit non pervenisse. Sed et multi alii historici, ob auctoritatem Ealstani, ad eum referunt quæ ad eum constat non pertinere." In the oldest Welsh annals we find him or his successor called *king of the Saxons*: Annal. Camb. a. 898, "Elstan rex Saxonum obiit."



CHAPTER V.

A.D. 885–901.

Continuation of Ælfred's Reign—Guthred—His Death, his Sons—Sagacity, Activity, and Learning of Ælfred—His Improvements—Laws—Administration—Intercourse with other Princes—Acquaintance with Foreign Countries—Use of Revenue—Northmen in France and Germany—His Conflicts with the Northmen—Battle of Farnham—Siege of Exeter—Wales—Ælfred's Will—His Family.

FOR a series of years England continued unassailed by the Northmen. Guthrum-Æthelstan died in 890, and was followed by a son or nephew of the same name, who renewed with Ælfred's successor the whole compact of their predecessors,¹ though the immediate successor of the elder Guthrum appears to have been Eohric or Eric, who reigned fourteen years.²

Bernicia was at this time governed under the Danes by Ecgberht, and the rest of Northumbria, after the death of Healfdene, by Guthred,³ son, it is said, of the Danish king, Hardeknud, who had been sold as a slave by Ingvar and Ubba to an English widow at Wittingham in Lincolnshire, but redeemed by means of the ecclesiastics, and raised to the throne of Northumbria. The

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 890 (one MS. 891). Sim. Dunelm. 890. Fl. W. W. Malm. a. 891. From a MS. Life of St. Neot quoted by Turner, i. p. 579, it would appear that Guthrum died in Denmark.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 905. W. Malm. i. 6.

³ Sim. Dunelm. a. 883.

clergy were richly rewarded for their services to Guthred. By him the bishopric of Durham was greatly increased, by the annexation of the decayed see of Hexham, and vast privileges were bestowed on the church of St. Cuthbert, among others the inviolability of fugitives for thirty-seven days, and an equalization of the breach of its peace with that of the royal palace, or a fine of ninety-six pounds of silver. On these privileges, confirmed by the West Saxon kings, and well preserved and enlarged by the bishops, are founded the rights of the later County Palatine, and the extensive jurisdiction which the bishop of Durham exercised in recent times, though with some restrictions introduced at the period of the Reformation; while similar privileges bestowed on other march-towns on the side of Scotland and Wales, as Chester, Lancaster, Pembroke and Hexham, have either been abolished, or long since fallen to the crown. The destruction of the church of Lindisfarne at this time by the Scots, reminds us how the horrors of barbarian warfare were still continued on the part of that people. With more certainty than the time of Guthred's accession we know that of his death, which took place at York, on the day of St. Bartholomew, in the year 894.¹ He left three sons, Niel, Sihtric and Regnald,² who at a later period re-

¹ Sim. Dunelm. h. a. Hist. Eccl. Dunelm. ii. 14. Ethelwerd, who places his death in 896, calls him Guthfrid, and informs us that he was buried in the cathedral of York.

² This interesting information is found in the extracts from the lost *Gesta Anglorum* in Adam of Bremen, lib. i. c. 35 (Nordmanni) "in Angliam quoque miserunt unum ex sociis Haldani, qui dum ab Anglis occideretur, Dani in locum ipsius Gudredum constituerunt. Ipse autem Northumbriam expugnavit, atque ex illo tempore Fresia et Anglia in ditioe Danorum esse feruntur. Scriptum est in *Gestis Anglorum*."—Lib. ii. c. 15. "Anglia autem ut supra diximus, et in *Gestis Anglorum* scribitur, post mortem Gud-

covered their paternal rights in Northumbria, although after the death of Guthred, Ælfred succeeded in re-establishing his supremacy in that country.

The before-mentioned compact of Ælfred and Guthrum determined not only the boundary between Wessex and East Anglia, but also that between the collective territories which still remained to the Anglo-Saxons, and those inhabited by the Danes. The latter were, moreover, distinguished by the appellation of the *Dena Lagu*, as the former were by that of the *West Sexena Lagu*, and *Mercena Lagu*, expressions which, originally referring solely to the laws, were subsequently applied to the kingdoms in which those laws respectively prevailed. A considerable part of the former kingdom of Mercia was thereby resigned to the Danes, though the western portion, or territory of the *Hwiccas*, remained to king Ælfred. The English part of Mercia was for a considerable time governed as a separate ealdormanship,¹ and first by Æthelred—the son-in-law of Ælfred, through his marriage with Æthelflæd that king's daughter—who soon received also the government of London. Æthelred appears to have enjoyed the power, and sometimes even the title of an under-king, and with the king's consent

redi a filiis ejus Analaf (sic), Sightric et Reginold, per annos fere centum, permansit in ditione Danorum." The usually received opinion, that Sihtric and his brothers were sons of Ivar, rests on an interpretation of the *Annals of Ulster*. See also *Sax. Chron.* a. 921. *Sim. Dunelm.* a. 914.

¹ There appears no reason to doubt, with Wanley and Smith, the genuineness of the document of 884 (*Smith's Beda*, p. 771), in which Æthelred speaks of himself, "*principatu et dominio gentis Merciorum subfultus*,"—"gentis Merciorum ducatum gubernans." What Asser, a. 886, says, is merely that the "*comes Merciorum*" at that time received possession of London. Florence, a. 894, calls him '*subregulus*'; Ethelwerd, '*rex*.'

he assembled the witenagemot at Gloucester, at which several bishops, ealdormen and other distinguished men of the country were present.¹ It is, indeed, not improbable that Æthelred had hereditary pretensions to Mercia which, like some of his predecessors, he strengthened by a connection with a daughter of the West Saxon royal house. Other circumstances in the interior of Mercia underwent little change, in consequence of this feudal relationship to Wessex. Thus we find that, while in the latter kingdom the consort of the king might not ascend the throne consistently, as the chroniclers inform us, with the regulations to which the crimes of Eadburh had given occasion,—but which probably, like the Salic law, was an essential principle of the West Saxon constitution,—the daughter of Ælfred, after the death of Æthelred, governed the country as lady (Hlæfdige) of the Mercians, and in a manner to justify the confidence of the law and the witan.

However varied as to its objects the activity of Ælfred might have been, however comprehensive his glance at every stage of his existence, yet the period that followed the last-mentioned victories over the Danes appears as the true holyday of his reign, the high festival of his life. Unshaken and indefatigable as he had been in his struggles with the enemy, he was no less sagacious, penetrating and unwearied in the restoration and improvement of that which he had by arms recovered and maintained. The destroyed fortresses were more strongly rebuilt, the ruined towns and roads restored, and many new ones constructed. While other Anglo-

¹ The Anglo-Saxon word *duguð* signifies both virtue, and the body of courtiers, or nobility. In like manner *virtus* is frequently used by Helmold and others for men collectively, or the inferior country nobles.

Saxon kings had taken advantage of the destruction of the monasteries by the Danes to appropriate their possessions to themselves and their vassals, Ælfred was engaged in protecting the rights of the clergy, and in improving their institutions. Among the ecclesiastical establishments founded by him, may be named the monasteries of Shaftesbury and Winchester, also one at Athelney. London, which by conflicts with the Northmen within its walls, and frequent conflagrations, was become an uninhabitable pile of ruins, he caused to be cleared and restored, rendering it fair and habitable.¹ In his own royal burghs and country-seats he himself set an example of more durable and comely buildings than the Anglo-Saxons had previously been in the habit of raising.

Of still greater importance than his architectural improvements on land, were those which he introduced into the art of ship-building. In form his vessels resembled neither those of the Frisians nor Danes, but were constructed on the plan which to him appeared most conducive to their efficacy. Some had sixty and even more rowers, and were higher, swifter and steadier, as well as nearly double the length of the Danish

¹ Asser, a. 884, "*Ædificia supra omnem antecessorum suorum consuetudinem venerabiliora et pretiosiora nova sua machinatione facere . . . non desinebat.*" Id. a. 893. "*Quid loquar de civitatibus et urbibus renovandis, et aliis, ubi nunquam ante fuerant, construendis? De ædificiis aureis et argenteis incomparabiliter, illo edocente, fabricatis? De aulis et cambis regalibus, lapideis et ligneis, suo jussu mirabiliter constructis? De villis regalibus lapideis antiqua positione mutatis, et in decentioribus locis regali imperio decentissime constructis?*" Spelman (*Vita Ælfredi*, lib. iii. § 8) supposes, from the passage last quoted from Asser, that Ælfred was the first to construct buildings of hewn stone, which is not there meant, but rather the older "*villæ regales lapideæ.*" See also Bede, *Vitæ Abbat. Wirem.* a. 676.

vessels (æscs). For the manning of these ships Ælfred, as we have seen, availed himself of the services of pirates, probably Frisians, the most experienced seamen of the middle ages.¹

It is difficult satisfactorily to determine in what Ælfred's merits chiefly consist with regard to the administration of his kingdom. Many institutions were formerly ascribed to Ælfred which had long been common property to all the Germanic nations, and which had been more fully developed among the Anglo-Saxons. To the hero to whom the nation owed so much it gratefully ascribed all, and the name of Ælfred became adorned with the glory of Cyrus, Theseus, Numa and Charles the Great.² Unprejudiced inquiry has, however, long since separated the beautiful image of the saviour and restorer from the ornaments with which later times had decorated it, and care is now to be taken lest that conceited criticism, which, hand in hand with desires subversive of all political institutions, is threatening to annihilate both the learning and the well-being of Europe, should in its narrow ignorance efface the memory of the greatest benefactor of this portion of the globe.

It was the zealous endeavour of Ælfred to re-establish among his people a state of law and order, and to secure it against violence and innovation. With this view he made a collection of the laws of the three principal states under his subjection, viz. the Kentish, the Mercian,

¹ For the ships see Asser, a. 877. The Sax. Chron. and Florence first make mention of them in 897. For the employment of Frisian sailors see Sax. Chron. l. c., to which also Asser's words, "impositis piratis," may allude, and, a. 884, "Frisones . . . sponte se suo dominio sublident."

² Hist. Rames. ap. Gale, t. i. p. 388. "Ælfredi regis, Anglicarum legum conditoris."

and the West Saxon, which the kings Æthelberht, Offa and Ine had caused to be recorded. Into these laws, with the council of his witan, he introduced some changes, though, as he himself informs us, he did not venture to insert many enactments of his own, as he was doubtful whether such would be approved by those who should come after him.¹ In the administration of the laws Ælfred was indefatigable. The poor, says Asser, had scarcely another friend but him. The power and lawlessness of the nobles had, during years of war and devastation, greatly increased, and through their influence the courts of justice were virtually suppressed. The greatest discord constantly prevailed among the judges, in consequence of their ignorance, and the greater number of causes had, for final decision, to be brought before the king's court.

Even in regard to causes which had been decided in the inferior courts, he was incessantly engaged in hearing and investigating the grounds of the decisions; in the course of which inquiries he frequently found occasion to instruct the judges, and to point out to them the necessity of acquiring that acquaintance with the law, as well as with other branches of knowledge, which in their earlier years they had neglected. Sometimes the severest punishment, even that of death, followed an unjust or inconsiderate sentence, as appears from no less than forty-four cases that have been transmitted to us.²

To Ælfred has been ascribed the civil division of the country into shires, which were again divided into hundreds, and these into tithings. As, however, no trace

¹ Ancient Laws and Institutes, p. 26, fol. ed.

² Asser *in fine*. Andrew Horne, *Miroir des Justices*. See also Cooper on the Public Records, vol. ii. p. 402.

of this distribution appears in Asser or any of the ancient writers, it is difficult to believe, that, in recording the deeds of Ælfred, they would have omitted all mention of an institution of such paramount importance, had he in their time been regarded as its author. Another institution, grafted on the above-mentioned division, and on no better authority attributed to Ælfred, is that of Frankpledge (Frithborh), or the system of mutual responsibility among the lower classes of the community, by which each man of a tithing was surety to the king for the good behaviour of every other, and, in the event of any offence, was bound to have the perpetrator forthcoming¹—a system by which the increasing acts of rapine and violence, naturally resulting from the late distracted state of the country, met with an effectual check. Ælfred also divided the duties of the ealdorman who had been previously set over a province or county, between that official and newly appointed judges.² The obscurity in which the administration of the several Anglo-Saxon kingdoms is wrapped hinders us from seeing into their organisation as clearly as could be wished. Yet, when we call to mind that Ælfred's states had been united since the days of his grandfather Ecgberht, and were more accurately defined by his treaty with Guthrum; and that in a political union of foreign conquerors, founded on a military constitution and the servitude of the conquered, many changes were requisite on its transformation into a state of free men directly based on a common legal consti-

¹ W. Malm. ii. 4.

² That this subdivision of authority is due to Ælfred seems to be proved by the circumstance that the charters of Ælfred's time first distinguish duces judicesve et præsides; so also in a document of 884 in Smith's Beda, p. 771.

tution, we cannot well doubt the necessity of the provincial division ascribed to him by old, although not contemporaneous writers. Nor can it, perhaps, be reasonably denied, that the comprehensive notion of the Germanic joint surety experienced through him fresh applications and modifications. By his improvements in the legal constitution, of which more circumstantial mention will be made hereafter, Ælfred, we are told, introduced such security into his kingdom, that the traveller who lost his purse on the highway would undoubtedly, after a month's expiration, find it again untouched, and that if golden bracelets were hung up on a crossway no passer-by would venture to carry them off.¹

To the undertakings ascribed to Ælfred belongs that of a register or statistic survey of his kingdom, according to the provincial division before mentioned, which was preserved in a roll at Winchester, the metropolis of his kingdom.² The truth of this account has been called in question; though in the Frankish history older examples of this institution are not wanting, and Ælfred's love of order—the foundation of all good government—is so well known to us, that old testimony may be allowed to dispel modern doubt.

Though the merits of the brave warrior, or of the active statesman—however distinguished they may have been, however they may have ennobled the kingly name—must, in the ever-expanding horizon of history, after hundreds or thousands of years, lose more and

¹ W. Malm. ii. 4. Nearly similar is the account given of public security under king Eadwine; under Frothi king of Denmark (Saxo Gram. t. i. p. 247. Chron. Erixi, Nr. 35); under Rollo duke of Normandy (Dudo, p. 64), and under Briant king of Munster (Depping, Expéditions, etc. t. i. p. 131.).

² *Inqulph.*

more of their original significance, and fade before other brighter lights, yet the star of Ælfred can sink with only the name of Britain, as his meritorious labours for the cultivation of his language and for the mental improvement of his people can only be forgotten with the Germanic tongues themselves. Christianity had already exercised considerable influence over the intellectual culture of the nation, and both the Scottish and Roman clergy had found worthy associates among the Anglo-Saxons. Education in England continued to be limited to the ecclesiastics, but amid so much internal warfare, during which the Danes had ravaged the country and burnt many cloisters, with their libraries and treasures, a number of the older learned churchmen had disappeared, and younger ones could not be brought forward. Thus it soon came to pass that, in the native land of Beda and Alcwine, at the time of Ælfred's accession, few south of the Humber, and not one person south of the Thames, could be found capable of translating a Latin work.¹ From Mercia he invited some individuals of eminence; and of these Plegmund, to whom the Saxon Chronicle has been repeatedly ascribed, was raised to the dignity of archbishop of Canterbury. Æthelstan and Werwulf were his chaplains. Werfrith, who was appointed to the see of Worcester, translated, at the king's command, the Dialogues of St. Gregory and of his disciple Peter, from Latin into Anglo-Saxon. To supply the want of learned men in the country, Ælfred sent agents abroad for the purpose of inviting foreign scholars to England, among whom are especially to be named Grimbald, provost of St. Omer's; John of Corvey in Old Saxony, a very learned and ingenious ecclesiastic, by inter-

¹ Ælfred's preface to translation of Gregory's Pastoral.

course with whom Ælfred greatly extended his knowledge, and whom he placed at the head of his newly founded monastery at Athelney; and Asser of St. David's, subsequently bishop of Sherborne, whom he retained with him during six months of the year, leaving him the remaining time for the duties of his station.¹ To Asser, who lived long on terms of the closest intimacy with the king, we are indebted for a biographical account of his illustrious friend, highly attractive both for its simplicity and copiousness. Among the scholars of that period with whom Ælfred held friendly intercourse, was the Scot, John Erigena, the most renowned dialectician of his time. An urgent and favourite occupation of Ælfred, when in his thirty-ninth year he had acquired a knowledge of Latin, was to translate works from that language into his mother-tongue, and thereby render them of general benefit to his people. Of these works the book of Boethius de Consolatione Philosophiæ is to us the most interesting, as he has inserted into many places of his translation his own sterling and well-expressed thoughts, as well as poetic embellishments.² His version of Beda's great historic work is another inestimable gift to his countrymen, which imparted to the excellent original all that it wanted to become a national work. The Pastoral of pope Gregory was, through the particular veneration in which it was held in England, a happy

¹ Asser.

² Many of these additions may be Asser's, from whose simplified text Ælfred formed his version. W. Malm. ii. 4 "Hic (Asserius) sensum librorum Boetii De Consolatione planioribus verbis enodavit, quos rex ipse in Anglicam linguam vertit." Id De Gestis Pontif. "Librum Boetii De Consol. Philos. planioribus verbis elucidavit, illis diebus labore necessario, nostris ridiculo. Sed enim factum est, ut levius ab eodem in Anglicum transferretur sermonem."

choice of Ælfred's for translation. From the mention made by him in the preface to this work of his instructors in the Latin tongue, and among them of archbishop Plegmund, who received the see of Canterbury in 899, we obtain an express testimony that this version was made after that year. His translation of the History of Orosius is to us particularly valuable on account of the description of Germany and the North of Europe prefixed to the work by the king himself, from the narratives of the travellers Wulfstan and Ohthere.¹ Other works are, with more or less foundation, ascribed to Ælfred, as translations of the Psalms, which he is said to have undertaken only a short time before his death;² of the Bible; of extracts from the Meditations of St. Augustine; of Æsop's Fables, and of a book on falconry. At the same time, it is sufficiently obvious that, although the leisure of his later years gave being to more works than the life of the most industrious authors of his time, the name of the venerated king might be sometimes given, by way of recommendation, to a book of which he had merely caused the translation or composition.³ The loss of one book written by himself, which he called his *Enchiridion*, or *Handboc*, is to be regretted, though, from the account given of it by Asser, it contained merely extracts from other works, and these chiefly theological.

Ælfred's extraordinary acquaintance, for his time, with the rest of the world, and his unquenchable thirst after knowledge, explain to us what is generally, though

¹ See Illustrations of this narrative in Dahlmann's *Forschungen*, Th. i.

² W. Malm. ii. 4.

³ Of his translations Ethelwerd mentions only that of Boethius by name, and says of the others, "numero ignoto."

not very correctly, called his mission to the churches of St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew in India. As he had frequently sent presents to Rome, and was in habits of intercourse with ecclesiastics in distant parts, of whom Abel only, patriarch of Jerusalem, is mentioned by name,¹ so he once, in consequence of a vow made when the Danes held possession of London,² sent gifts to India by the hands of two ecclesiastics, Sighelm, afterwards bishop of Sherborne, and Æthelstan. Such a step on the part of a monarch of Ælfred's character will excite in us but little surprise, and even that little will be diminished, if we call to mind the pilgrimages that had long been usual to the pillar of Symeon Stylites, and many places regarded as holy, while every doubt will be obviated by the oriental gems brought back by his envoys, some of which were in existence after a lapse of centuries.³ The splendid colouring given by later historians to this mission, by making Sighelm bishop of Sherborne, and calling Æthelstan an ealdorman, has also contributed to excite doubts of its reality, while Sighelm did not receive the bishopric of Sherborne till the death of Asser, twenty-seven years later.⁴

¹ Asser, a. 893.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 883. A siege or occupation of London in 883 is not here spoken of, but merely the fulfilling of a vow made (in 872) when the Danes occupied London. Henry of Huntingdon rightly understands the passage: "Alfredus in st cleemosynam suam Romæ, et etiam in Indiam ad S. Thomam, secundum votum quod fecerat quando hostilis exercitus hyemavit apud Londoniam." So also Alfred of Beverley.

³ W. Malm. ii. 4. "Sigelinus . . . Indiam penetravit; inde rediens, exoticos splendores gemmarum, et liquores aromatum, quorum illa humus ferax est, reportavit." Id. De Gestis Pont. ii. adds, "Nonnullæ illarum (gemmarum) adhuc in ecclesiæ monumentis visuntur."

⁴ Sax. Chron. a. 910. An erroneous or doubtful passage in

Ælfred appears to have maintained a more regular intercourse with Rome than any of his predecessors. From pope Marinus he obtained for the Saxon school exemption from all taxes and tolls, while to his successor, Stephanus, gifts, accompanied by letters, were sent yearly by the king.¹ It may reasonably be supposed that Ælfred availed himself of the opportunity afforded by this intercourse for the mental improvement of his people. As, like Solon, he himself ceased from learning only when he ceased to live, so he also anxiously provided for the education of his own children and those of his subjects. Thus we find that the sons of the nobility received instruction in the Anglo-Saxon and Latin languages, and in writing, and learning books, especially poems by heart, in their mother-tongue, before they were withdrawn by hunting and warlike exercises from pursuits of a higher nature.²

Florence, a. 883, led Matthew of Westminster to state that Asser was then dead and succeeded by Sighelm.

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 887-890. Asser, a. 884. Fl. W. a. 883.

² From the account given in Camden's edition of Asser, of a dispute between Grimbold and the scholars of Oxford, it would appear that a seat of learning was established there in the days of Ælfred. Grimbold, it seems, had commenced the functions of superior, to which he had been nominated by the king, by a total reform or change in their rules and studies, in which he met with a determined opposition on the part of the students, who defended their old institutions, which, as they alleged, had been sanctioned by Gildas, Melkinus, Nemius, Kentigern, and even Germanus. After a contest of three years, Ælfred himself went thither, with the view of restoring harmony, but it appears that his mediation gave umbrage to Grimbold, who betook himself to the monastery founded by the king at Winchester. This very questionable passage does not appear in Parker's edition of Asser, the MS. of which perished in the fire at the Cottonian Library; while the Savilian MS., from which Camden took his text, is no longer

The question here naturally suggests itself, how, under such inauspicious circumstances, Ælfred found time and means for the performance of so many and such great things? We obtain from the representation of his friend Asser an answer to the question, such as Charles the Great or Benjamin Franklin would have given: that the greatest economy and order in the use of time as well as of revenue, in connection with feasible plans, brings forth incredible results. Asser imparts to us the budget of the king's yearly disbursements. One half of his revenue was assigned to secular, the other to ecclesiastical purposes. The former half was subdivided into three portions, one of which was divided among his warriors and noble thanes, according to their rank, who in rotation performed duty in the court for one month in the quarter, dedicating the other two months to their own affairs. Another third was for the numerous builders and other workmen of many nations, whom he had gathered around him. The third portion was destined for the strangers who flocked to him from all parts, whether they were suitors for his bounty or not. The other half of his revenue he

extant, though we learn from his own authority that it was written about the time of Richard II. As both editions appeared after a fierce dispute had arisen regarding the superior antiquity of the Oxford—or Cambridge—University, the question naturally presents itself: Did Parker omit the passage, or did Camden either fabricate it, or really find it in the copy used by him? That he found it can hardly be doubted; equally clear is it that the passage is an interpolation from the Annals into Camden's modern MS., on which he, nevertheless, bestows the character of "optimus." The circumstance too, that not one of the authors whom Asser accurately copies, contains a trace of the passage, as well as internal evidence, speak loudly against its genuineness; but that either Parker or Camden was guilty of a fraud, is wholly out of the question. See Corp. Hist. p. 489, *u*^o, and Wise's edit. of Asser.—T.

ordered to be divided into four portions, of which one was for the poor of whatever nation they might be; the second for the two monasteries which he had founded at Athelney and Shaftesbury; the third for the school which he had formed for young nobles; and the last for all the neighbouring Saxon and Mercian monasteries and churches, and their ministers, and occasionally for those in Wales, Cornwall, France, Brittany, Northumbria, and, sometimes, even in Ireland. With equal exactitude he divided the services of his body and his mind between earth and heaven; and, that he might be the better able to distinguish the hours of the day from those of the night, he devised the following expedient. Of a quantity of wax weighing seventy-two pennies he caused six candles to be made of equal weight, and each of twelve inches in length. These, he found, were burnt out in exactly twenty-four hours. To prevent them from being extinguished or influenced by the currents of air from the doors and even crevices in the walls, he caused lanterns of wood and fine horn to be constructed, in which they were sufficiently protected.¹ And certainly it has rarely been granted to any mortal, in the same degree as to Ælfred, to consecrate the better part of his earthly life to the highest ends to which man can aspire, nor would it perhaps have been possible except in times when the personality of a favoured individual smooths the way for the advance of the lagging age.

The beneficial and peaceable pursuits of Ælfred were again, and for a long time, to be interrupted, and the glory of the hero once more to be proved. In the Frankish and Germanic states the Northmen had been repeatedly defeated and driven back to the mouths of

¹ Asser.

the rivers, where they both secured themselves against further attacks, and were enabled to gain some slight advantages. On the 1st of September 891,¹ Arnulf king of Germany had inflicted a deadly blow on them in the battle on the Dyle near Louvain. In the preceding year Hasting with his Danes had encamped at Argove, on the right bank of the Somme, and in the following year, after having, in contravention of his word, attacked the abbey of St. Vedast, he took up his quarters at Amiens. A detachment of his forces, consisting of five hundred and fifty men, made an attempt on the city of St. Omer's, the fortifications of which were not yet completed; but the brave inhabitants killed more than the half of them, and with equal good fortune repelled another attack, in which the barbarians had endeavoured to set fire to the place. It does not appear that Hasting was present with his countrymen at the battle on the Dyle, but, more fortunate than they, he repulsed king Eudes (Odo) before Amiens, and subsequently attacked him in Vermandois. In the following year (893) there was a great famine in the north of France, and the Danes evacuated Louvain, of which, notwithstanding the boasted victory over them on the Dyle, they had still held possession, and proceeded to Boulogne,² where they embarked in two hundred and

¹ On the 26th of June occurred the defeat of the Germans on the river Geul. Cf. Depping, *Expeditions*, etc., t. ii. p. 35. In the *Annal. Fuldens. h. a.* the deficiency after *Kalendis* is undoubtedly to be supplied by *Septembris*, which was long after celebrated in commemoration of the defeat of the Northmen at Louvain on that day. According to the *Annal. Vedast. h. a.*, the battle did not take place till the beginning of December. In the *Annal. Fuldens.* the account of the death of the Danish kings Sigfrid and Gottfrid is probably erroneous, as the *Annal. Vedast.* and *Rhegino* make mention of the death of both kings under the years 885 and 887.

² The *Annal. Vedast.*, a. 892, give the time more accurately than

fifty vessels (under a king who seems to have been the pupil and companion in arms of Hasting, the old Björn lærnside¹) and landed at the mouth of the Lymene in Kent, at the eastern part of the Andresdeswald. Up this river they towed their vessels for some miles, and destroyed a half-built fortress defended by a few peasants, and afterwards fortified themselves at Apuldre (Appledore) on the Rother, in Sussex. Shortly after, Hasting with his forces landed from eighty ships² at the mouth of the Thames, and, proceeding up the Swale, entrenched himself at Middletûn (Milton).

In this favourable position, in which both the Danish armies, protected by wood, water and works, could

the Sax. Chron. a. 893. Ethelwerd also places the expedition from Boulogne to Kent in the year after Arnulf's victory; so likewise Asser, Annal. a. 892.

¹ The English chroniclers make no mention here of Björn, but speak only of "a king." My assumption is founded on the following passage of Guido, ap. Alberic. a. 895: "*Bier(n) totius excidii signifer et exercituum rex, iterum Gallias infestans, ad extremum ab Arnulfo imperatore et Francis multis preliis victus, in Angliam, opportunum suæ tyrannidis suffugium, est expulsus, sed (ab) Anglis iterum victus, indeque Frisiam petens mortuus est ibidem.*" Will. of Jumièges (lib. i. c. 11) must, however, not be unnoticed: "*Bier, totius excidii signifer exercituumque rex, dum nativum solum repeferet, naufragium passus, vix apud Anglos portum obtinuit, quam pluribus de suis navibus submersis. Indeque Frisiam repetens, ibidem obiit mortem.*" Dudo does not mention Björn. For contemporary accounts concerning him, see also Prudent. Trecens. a. 858, Fragm. Chron. Fontan. a. 855-859.

² Depping, ii. 39, says that these eighty ships sailed from the mouth of the Seine, where they had possessed themselves of the town of Evreux. This error appears to have been occasioned by Asser's Annals, a. 893, where the occupation of Evreux and the flight of bishop Sebar are interpolated, which are copied from Dudo, l. ii. p. 77. If the above-given illustration is just, that event might have taken place in the year 885.

easily support each other, they continued a whole year without being attacked by the natives, when Ælfred, who was not insensible of the danger with which he was threatened by the power and name of Hasting, renewed the compact with the Danes in East Anglia and Northumbria, which had been dissolved on the death of the elder Guthrum. For the observance of this compact, both these states bound themselves by oaths, and the East Anglians gave also six hostages. Though Northumbria, which had now fallen to king Eohric (Eric), still continued on peaceable terms, if not in a slight feudal relationship to Wessex, it soon became evident that no reliance could be placed on such oaths, for these same Danes soon appeared ravaging the country, either separately, or in conjunction with the new invaders. Ælfred hereupon, leaving half his army at home, encamped with the other half in an advantageous position, secured alike by wood and water, between, and as near as possible to the two armies of the Northmen, where, if either of them ventured out into the open country, he could easily attack them. Here, it seems, Hasting was compelled to sue for peace, engaging on oath to withdraw from the territories of Ælfred, for the observance of which pledge he gave hostages. As a token of his sincerity, he permitted his two sons to receive baptism, Ælfred being sponsor for one and the ealdorman Æthelred for the other.¹ From Ælfred he, moreover, received costly gifts. But even this treaty appears to have been used by Hasting merely as a means whereby to elude the vigilance of Ælfred, as we find the Danes abandoning their position at Appledore, and proceeding across the Thames towards Essex. At Farnham they were overtaken by the royal

¹ Ethelwerd.

forces under the brave clito Eadward, and put to flight, leaving behind them the booty which they had taken, and the horses which they had brought from the continent. They crossed the Thames at a place where there was no ford, whence, proceeding along the Colne, they landed on the Isle of Thorney. Ælfred's plan to shut them up in this spot, and there to reduce them, was nearly frustrated, partly by his want of ships, and partly from want of provisions: his army also, having passed their term of service, was on its return, while with the half which had remained at home he was hastening to supply the place of the others. During this interval the Danes remained in their position, on account of their king, who had been wounded in the battle. While on his march towards the Colne, Ælfred received intelligence that the Northumbrians and East Anglians had assembled a fleet of about a hundred ships, part of which had sailed southwards and laid siege to Exeter, while the others went northward, and attacked a strong fortress also on the coast of Devonshire. The king hereupon proceeded with his main army to Exeter, having previously despatched a strong detachment eastwards under his son Eadward, which, on its arrival at London, being reinforced by the townsfolk, under the ealdorman Æthelred, proceeded thence to Benfleet, where the two Danish armies from Milton and Appledore were already stationed. Hasting had gone out to plunder, leaving his wife and children with great treasures in a fortress which he had raised at Benfleet. In a battle which ensued the barbarians were routed, when their fortress and all within it fell into the hands of the victors, who also destroyed or sent to Rochester or London all their ships. The wife and children of Hasting were generously restored to

him by Ælfred. The Danes now concentrated their forces in Essex, where, at Seeceburh (Shoebury), they fortified themselves, and where they were joined by many of their countrymen from East Anglia and Northumbria. Hence they proceeded by the Thames to the Severn, continuing their course along the banks of that river; whereupon the ealdormen Æthelred, Æthelm and Æthelnoth, with all the king's thanes, who were in the several fortified places, assembled forces from all quarters, and surrounded them at Buttington on the Severn, while Ælfred was still with his fleet in Devonshire. Here, cut off from succour, and reduced by famine (by which many had perished) to the necessity of devouring their horses, the Danes resolved on risking a battle, in which being defeated with great slaughter, they took to flight, and succeeded in reaching their former entrenchments in Essex, whence, having been joined by numbers from East Anglia and Northumbria, and having committed their families, ships and spoil to the care of the East Anglians, they proceeded with the utmost rapidity, by day and night, to Chester. Here the inhabitants had barely had time to retreat within their walls, before the enemy surrounded the place, seizing the cattle, burning the corn, and putting to death the stragglers whom they found without the wall. When the means of subsistence began to fail them, the barbarians, in the following year, passed into Wales,¹ which they plundered, and next directed their course, through Northumbria and East Anglia to Essex. Here they established themselves in the isle of

¹ Annal. Camb. a. 895. "Nordmanni venerunt et vastaverunt Loyer (England) et Brchemauc et Guent et Guinnluguiauc (the marsh district between the Severn, the Wye and the Tav)." Morganwg and Bualt are added in Brut y Tywysogion.

Mersey, but before the winter they towed their ships up the Thames into the Lea, on which river they fortified themselves at a spot about twenty miles from London, whence they made incursions into the interior, advancing as far as Stamford on the Welland. Being attacked by the Londoners and other forces, they repulsed them with the loss of four king's thanes. At the harvest-time, however, Ælfred led his army to the neighbourhood to protect the reapers, and as he was one day riding along the bank of the Lea, he perceived a spot where it was practicable, by the erection of a fort on each bank of the river, to prevent the return of the enemy's vessels. Before the completion of the work, the Danes, sensible of the perilous position in which they were placed, abandoned their quarters, and proceeded across the country to Cwatbricge (Quatbridge), on the Severn, where they established themselves for the winter. Their fortifications on the Lea were destroyed by the Londoners, who took their ships and burnt whatever spoil they were unable to carry off. In this year a Danish leader, probably Siegfried, a brother of Guthred of Northumbria, committed repeated depredations on the coast, and the army which had invested Exeter, on its return, ravaged the country in the neighbourhood of Chichester, but was routed with considerable slaughter by the townsmen. The sagacity and courage of Ælfred had now quelled the spirit of the barbarians. In the following summer many of them returned to their habitations in East Anglia and Northumbria, while those who were homeless procured ships, and betook themselves to the Seine. Others,

¹ Sax. Chron. Asser, Annal. a. 895. Depping says (ii. 75), —“Hasting revint avec une flotte de l'Angleterre; peut-être Alfred, pour susciter quelques troubles parmi les Francs, avait

who in small armaments continued to infest the southern coasts of England, were driven off with loss by the newly constructed ships of Ælfred, manned by West Saxon and Frisian mariners. On one occasion six ships of the enemy perpetrated considerable mischief on the Isle of Wight and the coast of Devonshire, on which Ælfred sent nine of his vessels to intercept them. These were met by three of the pirate ships, while the other three lay dry, their crews being engaged in plundering the country. Two of the Danish ships were taken, and the crews killed; the third, with five men only, escaped in consequence of three of Ælfred's ships having run aground on the side where the Danish ships were also lying. When the tide had sufficiently ebbed, the Danes from their three vessels attacked the English ships. In the conflict seventy-two of Ælfred's men, Saxons and Frisians, perished, while the enemy's loss amounted to a hundred and twenty. Favoured by the flood-tide the Danes were the first to get their vessels afloat, when two of them, owing to their crippled condition, were driven on shore, and the crews being conducted to Winchester, were by the king's command hanged. At this time a great pestilence raged, of which many persons of eminence died.¹

The alliance of the Welsh with the Danes had not yet wholly ceased, though various territories of the former had been repeatedly attacked and plundered by the latter; nor till the time of Ælfred were peaceable relations established between the Britons and the West

il fait monter cette flotte par des Anglo-Saxons." This statement we will leave unrefuted till we learn more of Ælfred's hostility towards the Franks, and Hasting's alliance with the Anglo-Saxons.

¹ Sax. Chron. aa. 897, 898.

Saxons. Hemeid, king of Dimetia, and Helised, king of Brecknock, unable longer to endure the tyranny of the sons of Roderic the Great, preferred placing themselves and people under subjection to Ælfred. Howel also, king of Gleguising, and Brocmail and Fernail, kings of Gwent, were driven by the violence and tyranny of the ealdorman Æthelred and the Mercians, to submit to his government.¹ And at length Anaraut, son of Roderic, with his brothers, renouncing his pernicious connection with the Northumbrians, came to Ælfred suing for his friendship, and was received honourably, being accepted as his son from the hands of the bishop, and receiving from him costly gifts, whereupon the Welsh prince surrendered his territory to the king, of whom he engaged to hold it on the same conditions as those on which Æthelred ruled the Mercians.² These relations continued without interruption during the days of Ælfred, whose remaining years were passed without disquietude from the Danes in or out of England.

A remarkable, and for history highly interesting memorial of Ælfred—his will,—remains to be noticed, as the source whence our knowledge is drawn of the testamentary provisions of his father Æthelwulf, and of the small amount of personal property possessed in those remote times by the kings of England. According to an agreement with his only surviving brother, Æthelred, made in a witena-gemot at Swinbeorh, the

¹ Asser, a. 885. "Illo enim tempore et multo ante, omnes regiones dexter aliis Britanniae partibus (the old British territories) ad Ælfred regem pertinebant, et adhuc pertinent: Hemeid . . . Houil . . . et Brocmail . . . expetivere regem, ut dominium et defensionem ab eo pro inimicis suis haberent."

² Asser.

survivor of them was to give to the children of the other those lands which they had themselves acquired, also those which had been given to them by Æthelwulf, excepting those which he had bequeathed to the three brothers in common. On the death of Æthelred some disputes arose regarding the succession, in consequence of which Ælfred caused his father's will to be read before a witenagemot assembled at Langdene, pledging himself to bear no ill will towards any one for speaking justly, and beseeching them not to fear deciding according to folkright; so that no man might say that he had wronged his kin, either young or old. Whereupon the witan declared, that nothing more just could be conceived, and that he might lawfully give or bequeath his property either to a relative or to a stranger, as might to him seem the more desirable. Ælfred then adds, "They all thereupon gave me their pledges and their signatures, that, while they lived, no man should ever change it in any way whatever, except so as I myself might determine at my last day." After this preamble, the king proceeds to the distribution of his property. To each of his two sons he devises lands and five hundred pounds; to his wife Ealhswith and each of his three daughters,¹ certain villages and one hundred pounds; to Æthelm and Æthelwold his nephews, and to Osferth his kinsman, certain villages and one hundred mancuses each;² to each of his ealdor-

¹ Ælfthryth, the youngest daughter, had the village of Lewisham in Kent, with its appurtenances, Greenwich and Woolwich, which in the year 916 she gave to the abbey of St. Peter, or Blandinium, in Ghent. The charters and several confirmations of these gifts still exist in manuscript, and have lately been brought to light by Prof. Warnkönig. Cf. rubr. "Terra Seti Petri de Gand, in Grenviz Hund." in *Domesday-Book*, t. i. p. 12.

² The mancus was thirty pence.—T.

men one hundred mancuses; to Æthered ealdorman a sword of a hundred mancuses; two hundred pounds to be divided among his followers; to the archbishop and three bishops one hundred mancuses each; lastly, two hundred pounds for himself and his father and those friends, for whose souls they had both made intercession, to be thus divided: fifty pounds to as many mass-priests, fifty to as many poor ministers of God, fifty to the poor, and fifty to the church in which he should rest. Ælfred then adds: "I know not for certain whether there is so much money, or whether there is more, though I imagine so. If there be more, let it be divided among those to whom I have bequeathed money. I had formerly devised my property in another manner, when I had more money and more kinsmen, and had committed the writings to many persons, but I have now burned such old ones as I could discover. If therefore any of them should be found, they stand for naught. And I will, that those to whom I have bequeathed my bôcland dispose of it not out of my kin after their death, but that it go to my nearest relatives, except any of them have children, and then it is more agreeable to me that it go to those born on the male side, as long as any of them shall be worthy of it. My grandfather bequeathed his lands on the spear-side, not on the spindle-side; therefore, if I have given what he acquired to any on the female side, let my kinsmen make compensation, and if they will have it during the life of the party, be it so; if otherwise, let it remain during their days as we have bequeathed it." He then desires his relations and heirs not to oppress any of his people, whether bond or free, nor aggrieve them by exactions of money or otherwise, but leave them free to serve whatever lord they will.

Ælfred died on the 28th of October, A.D. 901,¹ at the age of fifty-three, after having reigned twenty-nine years and six months. Greater and better earned glory has never been attached to the memory of any chieftain than that which encircles the name of Ælfred. What a contrast when we compare him with the bigoted, dastardly and lawless kings, under whom the independence, prosperity and civilization of the Anglo-Saxons were destroyed! Even when we compare him with those great princes, who in external circumstances and by the magnitude of their deeds may be likened to him — the energetic and sagacious Ecgberht; the Frankish Charles, the lord of half and the wonder of the whole contemporary and after world; the Czar Peter; or the Great Frederick — to none of these can we yield precedence over the great West Saxon king, whose course of life at once reminds us of all those great rulers, without being sullied by pernicious ambition and lust of conquest. Without the power of those princes, he achieved not less than they by battle and victory, against the enemies of Europe and their most formidable leaders; and when the sword had ceased its work, by the noiseless but secure conquest of conversion to Christianity. Yet it would be idle to attempt to separate the king from the man, and to seek the greatest renown of Ælfred and of other great sovereigns in aught else than the most prominent personality, with

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 901. The apparent disagreement, of Simeon, a. 899, with the Chronicle deserves little regard, as Simeon himself gives Indiction IV., which falls in the year 901. This account of the beginning and duration of his reign is also in accordance with the West Saxon Chronicles; and in the Anglo-Saxon Calendar, the 'Depositio Alfredi R.' is celebrated on the 28th Oct.

due regard to the circumstances under which it was developed, and through which it has so conspicuously been able to manifest itself. Therefore, without discerning, in some expressions of St. Neot and Asser, relating to Ælfred's early years, more than the exhortations of a loving but severe confessor, we may believe that the lessons of a past age and of his older friends, and the discipline of a disease which to a mind like his must have been conducive to reflection, together with the memory of days passed in adversity, made his character a combination of the hero and the sage never before and only rarely witnessed. Thus nine centuries have judged, and if observation and knowledge of human feeling confer the gift of prophecy, so will judge many centuries to come. Never can the hero of Æthelinges-ey be forgotten,—the genuine kingly scion, the forsaken fugitive, in whom lay hidden the weal of all Christian England,—who, more fortunate than Sebastian of Portugal or the Arthur of Avallon, personified in ancient myth and song, returned to his people, and saw the short winter succeeded by an abundant harvest. Even the Norman tyrants have regarded Ælfred with friendly feelings, and gladly claimed the glory of numbering him among their ancestors. And what pride, hope and solace must the remembrance of such a man have brought the Anglo-Saxon race! Nor will the present time cease to revere the sage, the legislator, and the instructor of his people, and it will revere him the more, because the remembrance of him is unconnected with any later excrescences and abuses in his rule and his conduct. But if men like Ælfred belong to every people and to every age in the cycle of the human mind, yet, next to the posterity of his own countrymen, the German specially,—whose speech and culture may yet

by continued research gather many golden fruits from the seed sown by Ælfred,—may say with joyful pride, “The man is near of kin unto us.”¹

By his wife Ealhswith, Ælfred had two sons, Eadweard who succeeded him, and Æthelweard (ob. 922),² two of whose sons fell in the battle of Brunanburh; and three daughters,—Æthelflæd, married to Æthelred, ealdorman of the Mercians; Æthelgifu, abbess of Shaftesbury, and Ælfthryth, married to Baldwin the Second, surnamed the Bald, count of Flanders, the son of Judith, the widow of Æthelwulf.

¹ Ruth, ii. 20. “Der Mann gehört uns an.” Count Fred. Leop. v. Stolberg’s motto to his German work on Ælfred, compiled from the labours of Mr. Turner.

² Fl. W.

CHAPTER VI.

A.D. 901-924.

Eadward the Elder — Æthelwold's Rebellion—His subsequent Life—His Defeat and Death—The Jutes—Defeat of Danes at Tettenhall—Invasion of Mercia—Erection of Fortresses—Invasion of Wales—Rising of Danes—Their Reduction—Death of Æthelflæd of Mercia—Invasion of Mercia by Danes and Welsh—Supremacy of Eadward—His Character—Death—Family.

AFTER the death of Ælfred, the voices of the witan¹ called to the vacant throne his eldest son Eadward (Eadweard), who had already proved his valour by his victory over Hasting in the memorable battle of Farnham. By some the conveyance of the whole kingdom to the son of a younger brother was regarded as a violation of the rights of Æthelwold, the son of Ælfred's elder brother Æthelred,² though whether they claimed for the ætheling the entire kingdom, or a share of it only, seems doubtful. It is probable that the original aim of Æthelwold himself was merely the recovery of certain private possessions, of which he considered himself to have been unjustly deprived by the provisions of his uncle's will; his first step being to seize, without permission of the king or the witan,

¹ Ethelwerd.

² This elder brother (as he appears to have been, according to all the best authorities except H. Hunt., who makes the pretender a younger son of Ælfred) is not named by the chroniclers, though his relationship is incontrovertibly proved by Ælfred's testament.

the royal vill of Twineham and Wimborne. Thereupon the king with his forces proceeded to Baddanburh (Badbury) near Wimborne, when Æthelwold, who was in the last-mentioned place, having barricaded the gates, swore that he would there either rule as a king or lie as a corpse. In the night, however, he abandoned his resolution and decamped, and Eadward on entering the town found a nun, whom, without his consent and against the prohibition of the bishop, Æthelwold had carried off and married, and who, by Eadward's order, was restored to her convent at Wimborne. Æthelwold fled to Northumbria, where the Danes, manifestly from political motives, chose the fugitive, who came among them seeking shelter and adherents, to be their supreme king.¹ A few years after, Æthelwold sailed with a large Danish fleet from Northumbria and East Anglia to Essex, of which province he made himself master, and whence, in the following year, he returned to East Anglia.² About this time or earlier, a Danish force landed in Kent, but whether under the command of Æthelwold or not we are uninformed. In a battle fought at Holme the men of Kent were so far victorious that the Danes were prevented from forming any settlement among them.³ Æthelwold

¹ H. Hunt. a. 901. "Constituerunt eum regem et principem super reges et duces suos." Chron. Mailr. "Rex et princeps regum eorum factus est."

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 904. W. Malm. ii. 5. That Æthelwold drew auxiliaries from France, appears to be an error of modern historians, such as sometimes arises from joining together detached fragments of various writers. Malmesbury's "piratæ" can only allude to the Danes in England, and the "transmarinæ partes" in Florence appear on comparison with the Saxon Chronicle, as well as other sources, to have been Essex, whither and whence he had sailed with the Danish fleet.

³ By Fl. W., Sim. Dunelm., Chron. Mailr. and Ethelw. the

now prevailed on the East Angles and their king Eohric¹ to undertake an expedition into Mercia, where the ealdorman Æthelred, the king's brother-in-law, still governed. They penetrated to Creccagelad (Cricklade), where they crossed the Thames, and, after having plundered and wasted the country around, returned homewards. Hereupon Eadward, having gathered his forces, proceeded to East Anglia, where he laid waste the district between the dyke of St. Eadmund and the Ouse. Having accomplished this work of destruction, retreat from a territory lying between the two Danish kingdoms was advisable; but the Kentish men, though seven times ordered by the king to return with the others, were not to be moved, and the Danes were not long in availing themselves of the advantage offered them by the separation of the royal army. They attacked the Kentish men, many of whom they slew, among others two ealdormen, a king's thane, an abbot, and several other men of eminence.² But these valiant men sold their lives at the price of the most complete victory, the two kings, Æthelwold and Eohric, Byrhtsige, son of Byrhtnoth the ætheling,³ the holds (*Holdas*),

victory at Holme is given under the year 904; by the Sax. Chron. in 902; by H. Hunt. in 912 or 913, and as of doubtful result. Æthelwerd confounds it with the somewhat later battle.

¹ Fl. W. a. 905.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 905. "Regis minister Eadwoldus, abbas Kenulfus." That great confounder of English history, Matt. Westmin., has "Eadwoldus et Kewulfus abbates."

³ The holds (*Holdas*) were numerous in Northumbria, and in Latin documents are termed *duces*. Their rank may be inferred from their wergild (4000 thrymsas), which was half that of an ealdorman and double that of a thane. See Anc. LL. and Inst. tit. 'Wer-gilds.' [Höldr is defined by Björn Haldorsen, *dominus fundi*;

Ysopa and Oskytel, and numerous others having fallen on the side of the Danes.

By this battle Eadward was not only freed from the most formidable of his enemies, but in the year following found the Danes well disposed to a peace which was concluded at Yttingaford (Ittingford¹). A result of this was the treaty still extant between Eadward and Guthrum,² the successor of Eohric, which was a renewal of the former one between Ælfred and Guthrum-Æthelstan. During his whole reign, Eadward appears as an Anglo-Saxon king in his original vigorous type, consolidating that which he held, extending his acquisitions, and, like Ecgberht, uniting, all England, under one supremacy, with the crown of Wessex.

The Jutes of the Isle of Wight, protected by their position, had hitherto maintained themselves in independence of Wessex under their own kings. During the reign of Ælfred the royal race became extinct in the person of Ælbert (Æthelberht) the son of Astulf, when the people placed themselves under the authority of Eadward. A similar resolution was adopted by the Jutes of Kent, who, since the death of king Baldred, had stood in a sort of kindred community with these islanders, and undisturbed as a free state.³ From this

aviti, vel allodialis. The index to the Grágás describes a hölldr as *colonus odalicus, vel fundum avitum tenens.*—T.] For ‘Thorketil,’ Florence has ‘Thurferth.’

¹ Sax. Chron. Sim. Dunelm. a. 906. “Rex Edwardus, necessitate compulsus (S.C. for neode) pacem firmavit cum Orientalibus Anglis et Northanhymbrensibus.” On the other hand, Fl. W. says: “Paganorum exercitus de East-Anglia et Northimbria, invictum esse regem Eadwardum scientes, pacem cum eo faciunt.”

² See Anc. LL. and Inst.

³ Wallingford, ap. Gale. t. i. p. 538.

period no distinct mention of the old Jutish race appears again in history.

A few years only had passed, when the turbulent Danes in Northumbria violated the treaty to which they had sworn, and it was probably not without satisfaction that Eadward saw the necessity of sending an army of West Saxons and Mercians into that territory, where they continued during five weeks plundering and ravaging, and returned laden with spoil and with many captives. Under these circumstances, the sons of Guthred and other Danish leaders were compelled to renew the treaty which they had broken.¹ About the same time a great battle was fought between the Mercians and the Danes at Teotan-heal (Tettenhall) in Staffordshire, in which the latter were defeated. In this year Æthelflæd, the lady of the Mercians, erected a fortress at Bremesburh.

In the following year Eadward passed some time in Kent, awaiting a fleet of a hundred or more ships, which he was collecting on the south-eastern coast.² As England at this period appears to have been in a state of tranquillity, the destination of so numerous a fleet would seem to have been some foreign shore. Without connecting it with the marriage concluded about this time, or a few years later, of Eadward's daughter Eadgifu with the Frankish monarch, Charles the Simple, or with the reception given to the regent of Brittany, Mathuedoi, count of Poher, and his young son Alan, who had been driven from their country by the Normans, and whom Eadward caused to be baptized and educated with his own son Æthelstan,³ we may

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 910. ² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 911.

³ Chron. Namnet. ap. Bouquet, t. viii. p. 276, but where it is said, that the child Alan was brought to king Æthelstan, and in

hazard the conjecture that the king of England's object might have been to send aid to the sovereign of France against Rollo, who, in the same year, by the treaty of St. Clair-sur-Epte, wrested from him the province of Normandy. In the meanwhile the Northumbrians, either in agreement with their brethren in France, or of their own accord, seeing the favourable moment, when the greater part of the English army was on board the fleet, again violating the treaty, burst into Mercia, and penetrated to the Avon, whence they proceeded to the Severn, which river (after having collected a vast booty along its western bank) they crossed at the bridge of Quatford or Bridgenorth in Shropshire. Soon, however, a Mercian army, under the command of Eadward's valiant sister Æthelflæd, intercepted them on their march homewards, and giving them battle at Teotanhele (Tettenhall in Staffordshire), victoriously drove them back.¹ On receipt of this intelligence, Eadward immediately despatched an army of West Saxons and Mercians to expel the barbarians, who were overtaken on their return laden with spoil at Wodnesfeld, where in the battle which took place, the Danish kings Eowils and Healfdene, brothers of Ingvar² (of

the margin, immediately after the date 912, stands 931; but as the text adds, that Alan and Æthelstan were educated together, and that the former, when of mature age, returned to Brittany, the date 931 cannot be correct, and should either be 913, or refers to the first return to his country of the Breton prince, who was acknowledged prince of Brittany in 937. Daru (*Hist. de Bret.*) appears also to assume an earlier time, but avoids the necessary proof by omitting the name of Æthelstan and the date in his citation from the Chronicle of Nantes.

¹ Ethelw. Fl. W. a. 911. Sim. Dunelm. a. 910.

² According to Ethelwerd, Ingvar himself fell in this battle.

whom the English annals make mention thirty years earlier) the jarls Ohter and Scurfa, nine holds and men of note, besides a considerable number of common people, were slain.¹ The royal names mentioned on this occasion excite some suspicion, and justify the doubt whether the chroniclers may not have blended the remembrance of some former battle with their account of the present one.

The consequences, however, of this battle were not doubtful. England was freed from the attacks of the Danes, who were sharply chastised; but in the meanwhile the treaty of St. Clair-sur-Epte was concluded, and the Northmen obtained a province in France, which proved more baneful to England than to that country, and even more so than the cessions made to the Danes in England itself.

Soon after the restoration of tranquillity, Eadward, on the death of his brother-in-law Æthelred, increased his power by the peaceable acquisition of London and Oxford with their respective territories. Æthelred had long been the victim of disease, which had impaired his mental and bodily energies.² After the death of her consort, Æthelflæd continued to conduct the government of Mercia, in which she proved herself a daughter worthy of her illustrious sire. Of the firmness of her

¹ Ethelw. Fl. W. Sim. Dunelm. a. 910. Wodnesfeld is less than two English miles west of Tettenhall, and it would not appear unreasonable to suppose one and the same battle under two names, did not Florence expressly distinguish them from each other. Ethelwerd names the first place only: the other chronicles, according to all the known MSS. (however they vary in chronology), only the second.

² Fl. W. a. 912. "Eximie vir probitatis, dux et patricius, dominus et subregulus Merciorum, Ethelredus, post nonnulla quæ egerat bona, decessit."

character and her capacity to govern others she gave a remarkable proof, when, on the birth of a daughter, she resolved in future to live a life of continence, in order to avoid whatever might be obstructive to her duties as regent.¹

Eadward's exertions were now, conjointly with Æthelflæd, chiefly directed to the construction of a number of fortresses in his kingdom, for the purpose of preventing the Danes from extending their territory, and of checking any sudden inroads. The several fastnesses on their respective boundaries had nearly all fallen into the hands of the Danes, from whence they held the neighbouring country in a constant state of alarm and warfare. Two fortresses were erected by Eadward at Hertford, and one at Witham in Essex, against the East Angles; while Æthelflæd caused similar ones to be constructed at Bridgenorth, Tamworth, Stafford, Warwick and other places.² It must appear very striking to those who suppose an isolated advance in every state and even in each of its provinces, during the middle ages,—and who have neglected to notice the synchronism of mental impulse, and the origin of many institutions in the several kindred nations during that period,—to find, only a few years later, a perfectly similar systematic establishment of towns or fastnesses in Germany, under the emperor Henry the First, who, as we shall soon have occasion to notice, was in close connection and relationship with Eadward. Though a newly discovered superior mode of constructing fortresses with walls of stone or

¹ W. Malm. lib. ii.

² See Sax. Chron. Fl. W. aa. 907-918. The former constantly has, "ja burh getimbrede;" the latter, "arcem munitam extruxit," or "urbs condita;" etc.

brick¹ may have been the immediate cause of these numerous foundations, yet both monarchs also published laws, through which out of those fastnesses considerable cities and towns have subsequently arisen, in consequence of Eadward's ordinance, that no purchase should be made without the port or gate,² and of the German king's injunction, as far as the indefinite terms of the chronicler enable us to ascertain, that the settlement of transactions, and the holding of solemn or social meetings, should take place in the towns.³

The possession of London opened the way to that of the southern part of Essex, where Eadward invested the town of Maldon, while his fortress at Witham was in progress, when many of the people, who had been under subjection to the Danes, submitted to his government.

While the king was restoring the Saxon supremacy in the east, his heroic sister was conducting a war for its security in the western parts of the kingdom. Hugar (Owen, Eugenius), king of Gwent, had taken advantage of his liege-lord's absence to make an inroad into his states, whence he was driven by Æthelflæd, who entered Wales, took Breccenan-mere (Brecknock) by storm, and made his wife and thirty-four of his people captives.

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 921, "mid stán-wealle." Fl. W. a. 918. "Toucestra mura lapideo cingitur . . . ad Coleceastram abiit, et murum illius redintegravit." The weakness, however, even of these fortresses may be inferred from the number of castles built by William the Conqueror, concerning which see Ellis, *Introd. to Domesday*, vol. i. pp. 211-224.

² Laws of Eadward II. in *Anc. LL. and Inst.*

³ Wittekind Corvey, lib. i. "Concilia et omnes conventus atque convivia in urbibus voluit celebrari." On the sense of these words see G. E. Wilda, '*De Libertate Romana Urbium Germanicarum.*' Halis, 1831.

The Briton did not, however, return to his allegiance, but fled to the Danes at Derby; and on the last day of July in the following summer the Lady of Mercia gained possession of the place. One of her chief officers, of the race of the lords of Ely, who is called in the Welsh annals Gwynan, set fire to the gate; the Danes, nevertheless, defended themselves with the fury of despair, four of Æthelflæd's bravest thanes were slain, and Owen himself, who neither sued nor looked for favour, fell on his own sword.¹

The erection of the several fortresses naturally excited the jealousy and apprehensions of the Five-burghers and other Danish settlers. An army of these people from Northampton and Leicester proceeded to Towcester, which they endeavoured to take by storm, but the garrison having received a reinforcement they were repulsed. About the same time, another army from East Anglia and Huntingdon, having constructed a fortress at Tempsford (Tempsford), marched to attack Bedford, from which place they were driven with considerable loss. A body of pagans from the Danish ports of Mercia, East Anglia and Essex, who had penetrated into Herefordshire, were equally unsuccessful in an attack on the fortress at Wigingemere (Wigmore), while Eadward's army with increased ardour penetrated to Tempsford, where the Danish king—whether Guthrum or another we are not informed,—the jarl Toglos (Togleas) his son, the jarl Manna and his brother, with other chieftains, were shut up, all of whom, on the capture of the place, were slain. Encouraged by this example, the men of Kent and the Saxons of Essex and Surrey, with many from the neighbouring fastnesses,

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 916. Caradoc. Fl. W. Sim. Dunelm. Chron. Mailr. a. 917.

now assembled together and invested Colchester, which they took, and slew all the Danes whom they found in the place; while the East Anglians, together with the pirates of their race, who had been induced to join them, attacked the new fortress at Maldon, but on the approach of a force to its relief were compelled to abandon the attempt. In their retreat they were pursued by the besieged, by whom many of them were slain and the others dispersed. Shortly after these events, Eadward caused Towcester to be encompassed with a wall of stone, when the jarl Thurkytel and the Holds of Northampton submitted to his authority. The king now with one half of his army returned home, but sent the other half to take possession of Huntingdon, which he caused to be rebuilt and garrisoned, when all the inhabitants of those parts submitted to him and sought his protection. With a West Saxon army he next proceeded to Colchester, in which he placed a strong garrison, and the walls of which he caused to be repaired. At this time, the people of East Anglia, and those of Essex, after a subjection of nearly thirty years to the pagans, joyfully placed themselves under his protection. Even the Danes of East Anglia and the army at Cambridge swore allegiance to Eadward, acknowledging him for their lord and patron (to "hlaforde" and to "mund-boran"), binding themselves by new pledges "to will what King Eadward willed, and to fight those whom he fought, both on sea and land." About the same time Æthelflæd obtained possession of Leicester, by the surrender of the Danish garrison. Following their example, the Danes also at York, by compact or oath, declared themselves ready to obey her in all things.¹ This rapid success, though

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 921. Fl. W. aa. 918, 919.

chiefly to be ascribed to the awe with which by his character as well as arms Eadward had inspired his enemies, might also be partly owing to his policy in promoting the emigration of many powerful Danes to the newly established Norman state in France, of which we have an example in his ready compliance with the wish of the jarl Thurkytel to pass over to France, his absence being no doubt considered preferable to his vassalage.¹

During these contests in the eastern parts of the kingdom, Eadward had to defend himself against an attack of the 'Lidwiccas'² from Brittany, under the jarls Ohter and Hroald. These, it has been supposed, were the same Danes who eighteen years before had left England for France,³ and now, after the treaty of St. Clair-sur-Epte, had probably been expelled by the discontented Bretons, or even by Rollo himself. Under their jarl Ohter, and Osulf, afterwards jarl of Northumbria, in alliance with the Northumbrian king Reginwald, they first attacked Cracaba (Clackmannan) and Dunblin (Dunblain) beyond the Forth, and destroyed

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 920. Fl. W. a. 917.

² Sax. Chron. a. 910. Ingram (in Sax. Chron. p. 131) derives this word from 'lid,' *ship*, and 'wiccian' (r. wician), *to inhabit*. Nennius (c. xxiii.) gives another explanation, viz. "Letewiccion (Lhet Vydion, *Camd.*), i.e. *Semitacentes*, quoniam confuse loquuntur. Hi sunt Britones Armorici." I would rather derive it from the old name of Armorica, Lætica, terra Lætuvia (see Daru, i. 25), in favour of which the reading 'Liowwicum' speaks, as well as the derivation of the German word 'Leute' from the Læti of the Roman province. [In the Scōp or Scald's Tale, the line "mid lid-wicingum" would countenance the deriving of the word from lid, *ship*, and wicing, *viking, piracy*. In one MS. also of the Sax. Chron. a. 885, the reading 'lid-wicing' occurs. See Cod. Exon. pp. 323. l. 17, and 519.—T.]

³ Suhm, *Historie af Danmark*, B. ii. p. 513.—T.

the last-mentioned place.¹ They afterwards landed at the mouth of the Severn, plundered the coast of Wales, destroying whatever they were unable to carry off, and at Irkenfield made prisoner the bishop of Llandaff, Cameleac, whom they bore to their ships, and for whose release Eadward paid a ransom of forty pounds of silver. On a second landing they were met on the way to Irkenfield by the men of Hereford, Gloucester and the neighbouring places, and in a battle which ensued, Hroald, with a brother of Ohter and a considerable part of the army, was slain. The rest were put to flight, and being afterwards surrounded in an enclosure, were compelled to give hostages for their immediate departure from the kingdom. But Eadward, whom long experience had taught what degree of faith was to be placed in the honour of these barbarians, posted bodies of men from the southern shore of the Severn along the coast westwards, notwithstanding which the Danes effected a landing, first at Weced (Watchet) and again at Portloca (Porlock), but were each time beaten off with loss. Thence they betook themselves to the isle at Bradanrelice (Flatholme²) in the Bristol Channel, but being driven by hunger, they passed into South Wales, and over to Ireland.³

¹ Sim. Dunelm. a. 912.

² Sax. Chron. a. 918. Fl. W. a. 915, has "insula quæ Reoric nominatur."

³ Sim. Dunelm. a. 912. Annal. Camb. a. 913. Sax. Chron. aa. 910, 918. Fl. W. a. 915. H. Hunt. a. 918. All of whom, though agreeing as to the events, differ widely in the time; but internal reasons, the manifest error of the Chronicle, which places the death of Æthelflæd in 918, and again in 922, and the tolerably accurate notices in Florence of foreign events, for which we have other independent testimony, incline us to prefer the authority of the latter.

In the following year Eadward, in prosecution of his designs for the subjugation of the Danes, proceeded to Stamford, where he caused fortresses to be erected on the south side of the river Welund (Weland), and reduced all that neighbourhood under his power. Shortly after these occurrences Eadward lost his heroic sister, who expired at Tamworth¹ not long after her greatest and most beneficial work—her treaty with the Danes at York. She left a daughter Ælfwyn, for whose hand Guthred's son is said to have been a suitor.² If the young princess was not herself averse to his proposal, we cannot blame the policy of Eadward in depriving her of all authority, and annexing the Mercian territory to his own, thereby uniting all the Germanic inhabitants of England under one government. Ælfwyn unwillingly relinquished her prospect of rule, and Eadward found it necessary to convey her forcibly into Wessex. The Anglian and Danish inhabitants of Mercia quickly submitted to the authority of Eadward, who ceased not to strengthen his extended dominion by new fortresses at Badecan-wylla (Bakewell) in Peakland, Manchester, Thelwall and other places.³

The death of Æthelflæd had, however, raised hopes in one quarter of conquering the land no longer defended by her masculine spirit and genius. Sihtric, Guthred's son, who had slain his elder brother Niel,⁴ and now

¹ Fl. W. H. Hunt. a. 919, 19 Cal. Julii. Sax. Chron. aa. 918 and 922. Annal. Camb. a. 918.

² Caradoc, p. 47.

³ Sax. Chron. aa. 919, 923, 924. Fl. W. aa. 920, 921.

⁴ In the Sax. Chron. and H. Hunt. this event is recorded under the year 921, while Simeon assigns it to 914, a date which well accords with other circumstances, and therefore to be preferred, though, in his 'Historia alia,' Simeon, inconsistently with himself, places it under 920.—T.

with Regnald governed in Northumbria, made an inroad into Mercia at Davenport in Cheshire,¹ the result of which does not appear to have been to his advantage. A short time after, Leofred, a Dane, and Griffin ap Madoc, a brother-in-law of Owen, prince of West Wales, in conjunction with an army from Ireland, landed in Wales, in the hope of gaining possession of that territory and the adjacent country. They succeeded in making themselves masters of Chester and the neighbouring lands, and the presence of Eadward was necessary for the recovery of that important city.² Having reached the enemy, in the forest of Walwood (Sherwood), he divided his army into two bodies, one of which he entrusted to his son Æthelstan, the other to his sons Eadmund and Eadred. Æthelstan being personally assailed by Leofred, wounded him with his spear and compelled him to yield; Griffith fell with his younger brothers, and the heads of both leaders were displayed as trophies over the gates of Chester. The kings of Wales, Howel Dda, Clitauc and Idwal, swore allegiance to Eadward. Those of Northumbria, as Sihtric, Uhtred and Regnald, who had obtained possession of York, and all the Danes in that country,³ with the kings of Scotland and Strathclyde, acknowledged king Eadward as their father and lord, and concluded a firm alliance

¹ Sim. Dunelm. a. 920.

² I the more readily adopt the narrative of Caradoc, as W. Malm. (ii. 6) also says, "Rex Eadwardus, paucis ante obitum diebus, urbem Legionum fiducia Britonum rebellantem a contumacia compescuit." For Eadward's supremacy over Wales, see Palgrave, ii. p. cxxliv. See also Sax. Chron. a. 922; though if the Annal. Camb. are correct, Clitauc was already slain in 919.

³ Sax. Chron. a. 922. Sim. Dunelm, a 919, where for 'Rex Inguald,' read *Reginuald*.

with him.¹ Among those who did homage to Eadward was also Aldred (Ealdred), called of Bamborough, the son of Eadwulf, a friend of Ælfred, who was probably the ancestor of the earls of Northumberland, so distinguished in the following century.² He appears to have been one of those petty princes or chiefs who, like Ælfred's father-in-law, the ealdorman of the Gainas, and the before-mentioned lord of Ely, preserved their liberty and connection with Mercia and the rest of England, though in the midst of the Danes. Eadward was now more powerful than any Bretwalda had ever been, and we perceive the views of Ecgberht and Ælfred realized by this indefatigably active and sagacious prince, who, when at the summit of his prosperity, was, in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, surprised by death at the royal town of Fearndûn (Farringdon).³

The constant warfare in which Eadward was engaged left him little leisure for occupations connected with the arts and sciences, which had been loved and cultivated by his father. Perhaps too he lacked the devoted inclination and earnestness of will for which Ælfred was so distinguished. During the reign of Eadward we meet with no new name otherwise con-

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 924. Fl. W. a. 921. Chron. Mailr. a. 921. "hominium fecerunt."

² That Eadwulf was the progenitor of the earls of Northumberland so distinguished in the following century, appears probable as well from other circumstances as from the constantly recurring names of Eadwulf, Uhtred and Aldred. See Sax. Chron. aa. 924 and 926. Fl. W. a. 926. Sim. Dunelm. Hist. S. Cuthberti, p. 74. Palgrave (ii. p. cccxxiii.) gives another descent to these earls, from a MS. of the fourteenth century.

³ Sim. Dunelm. Fl. W. a. 924, where the Indiction xv. is an error for xii., and afterwards, a. 940, Indict. xiv., instead of xiii. Sax. Chron. a. 925.

spicuous than in war, yet he provided for the venerated friends of his father. To retain Grimbald with him, who was desirous of returning to St. Omer's, he caused the new monastery at Winchester to be erected,¹ with a spacious church and other buildings. Under him the pilgrimages of the English to Rome still continued unabated.² In the estimation of the clergy Eadward's merit was great, when, at the instance of pope Formosus, he founded three new bishoprics out of the extensive sees of Winchester and Sherborne, which by the death of the occupants had fallen vacant, viz. those of Wells, Crediton and St. Petroc in Cornwall.³ His endeavours for the improvement of the laws are known to us from those bearing his name still in existence, among which none was more beneficial than the one already noticed, by which the fortress of the warrior was made available for the promotion of commerce and of justice, and became, as it were, the cradle of the Germanic burgher-class founded on arms and industry.

Eadward was thrice married and the father of five sons and nine daughters, in whose careful education he imitated his father Ælfred. His first wife or concubine was a noble lady named Ecgwin,⁴ who bore him a son, Æthelstan, and a daughter, whose name has not been transmitted to us, married to Sihtric the Danish king of

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 903. Mon. Angl. Annal. de Hyde, ap. Alford.

² Chron. Frodoardi ap. Bouquet. t. vii. pp. 177, 180.

³ W. Malm. ii. 5. R. Wendover, t. i. p. 371.

⁴ W. Malm. (ii. 5) calls her "*illustris fœmina*," but, ii. 6, says, "*ut ferunt, concubina*," adding, however, "*hanc notam, si tamen vera est.*" He afterwards gives the story of the shepherd's daughter. Florence styles her "*mulier nobilissima*." The Annal. Rames. c. iv. have "*alto quidem patris profusus sanguine, sed, ut fertur, non æque nobilis exceptus gremio concubinæ.*"

Northumbria. His second wife was Ælflæd, a daughter of the ealdorman Æthelm, by whom he had—1. a son named Ælfweard, who died soon after his father; 2. Eadwine, of whom hereafter; and six daughters: 1. Eadflæd; 3. Æthelhild, who both embraced a religious life; 2. Eadgifu, married to Charles the Simple; 4. Eadhild, to Hugh the Great, count of Paris; 5. Ælfgifu, to some prince in the neighbourhood of the Alps; 6. Eadgyth, to Otto the First, king of Germany. By his third consort, Eadgifu, he had Eadmund and Eadred, who, after Æthelstan's death, in succession ascended the throne, and two daughters, Eadburh, a nun at Winchester, and Eadgifu, married to Louis of Aquitaine,¹ king of Arles. Of Eadburh the following tale is related: When she was scarcely three years old, her father placed a chalice and the gospels in one part of the room, and rings and bracelets in another, when, on being asked which she would choose, Eadburh regarding the ornaments with a frown, crept to the cup and gospels. Whereupon her father exclaimed, "Go whither the divine Spirit calls thee, follow with happy footsteps the spouse whom thou hast chosen."² For the sake of the political relations to which we have already alluded, it would be desirable to know at what period the marriage took place between the daughter of Eadward and Charles the Simple, but the annals of both nations leave us in uncertainty regarding the date of an event so interesting as the first marriage of an English king's daughter with a king of France. After her husband's imprisonment by Herbert count of Vermandois in the year 923, Eadgifu fled with her infant son Louis d'Outremer (so called

¹ Ethelw. Proœm. Flor. Geneal. W. Malm. ii. 5. [who mistakes between Ælfgifu and Eadgyth.—T.]

² W. Malm. ii. 13. De Pont. lib. ii.

from his long abode in England) to her father, not long before his death, who received her with paternal affection.

Mention is also made of another son of Eadward and brother of Æthelstan, named Gregorius, whom a yearning after heavenly goods drew from his father's court to the graves of the apostles, and from the city of St. Peter to the wilds of the Alps. At his instance, his brother-in-law, the emperor Otto, it is said, converted a chapel, founded by St. Meinrad, into an abbey known as that of our lady at Einsiedeln.¹ The old and the modern writers of English history have alike overlooked this anecdote of a connection between their royal house and that celebrated cloister, the truth of which there appears no valid reason to doubt, and which, even if unfounded, would, as mere tradition, prove the wide-spread renown of Eadward more incontrovertibly than any praise bestowed on him as an endower of monasteries.

¹ J. v. Müller, *Geschichte der Schweiz*, Bd. i. c. 12, n. 295. [The name of Gregorius was probably assumed on his entering the church.—T.]



CHAPTER VII.

A.D. 924-941.

Æthelstan's military Renown—Traditions concerning him—Opposition—Æthelstan's Policy—His Relations with the Danes—Condition of the Scandinavian Lands—Æthelstan's Intercourse with the Norwegian King and with foreign Princes—Subjection of East Anglia and Wales—War with Scotland—Invasion of Northmen—Battle of Brunanburh—Character of Æthelstan—His Legislation—Frithgilds.

It was the happy lot of Æthelstan, the eldest of Eadward's sons, who had already signalised himself by his military prowess, to enjoy all the fruits of the valour of his forefathers, during a reign though not long yet pre-eminent in glory each year of which appeared destined to witness a new exaltation of the Anglo-Saxon name. It is a sign more confidently to be relied on than the most unqualified praise bestowed by monkish chroniclers, and one by which the historic inquirer recognises the greatest characters in the misty region of the past, when we find them transmuted by the grateful enthusiasm of their contemporaries into poetic forms, and, through perpetuation in deep-felt traditions, lost, as it were, to undisguised authentic history for ages, and often for ever. To render present and eternize that which is deeply felt, ordinary words are insufficient, and, in the plastic garb of poetry, posterity retains an incontrovertible testimony of the feelings and tone in which antiquity celebrated its heroes.

The foregoing remarks are particularly applicable to Æthelstan, the circumstances of whose birth were early veiled in obscurity, and are thus narrated: A shepherd's daughter of transcendent beauty sees in a dream a moon shining from her body, the light of which illumined all England. The dream is reported to the person who had nursed the children of Ælfred, and who, on inquiry into the matter, received the maiden into her house and treated her as a daughter. It happens shortly after, that prince Eadward, on passing through the village, visits his nurse, where he sees and falls in love with the fair Ecgwin. Youth and beauty consecrate the union decreed in a supermundane world. Æthelstan is born, and a hitherto unknown glory beams over his native land!

This Saga in its application to Æthelstan is not devoid of interest from the light which it throws not merely on the immediate circumstances of his reign, but on the history of his people and times generally. We here for the first time observe that the Valhalla, with all its gods, has vanished from the faith of the Anglo-Saxons, and that the gods themselves are scarcely even honoured as an ancient heroic race. Odin in the eyes of the people is a pitiable trickster, Freya a contemptible wanton. Thus the old national constitution had with its religion lost its main support, the sanctity of the reigning families had departed with their ancestors Odin and Saxnote, and the importance of the nobles had vanished in an equal degree. The people had outgrown their religion and the old forms of political wisdom, while even the kings of Wessex, the last surviving heirs of Odin, had come to scorn that which had once been sacred and important to them, and to despise the exclusive, arrogant policy of their race, to seek their

wives only among the descendants of their own sacred progenitor. It is not improbable that the example of the Norman princes, who were wont to enter into irregular matrimonial relations, such as are only known to the most unfettered piratical hordes, may have had an injurious influence on them. But when the anarchy of the vikings had ceased, and the state had become established on a firmer basis than it had yet known, we find that the revolution of feeling merely led to new applications of the old principle, not to its subversion. The idea of equality of birth, which had formerly been centered in the Odinic races, was extended to all royal families, and in Æthelstan, the son of the shepherd's daughter, we have an instance not to be paralleled by that of any of his royal contemporaries, of a king who gave his numerous sisters in marriage exclusively to European princes.

Æthelstan, when a beautiful and elegant child, was the favourite of his grandfather, and the people had not forgotten how Ælfred, with his benediction, had dedicated him to a soldier's life, by the gift of a purple mantle, a belt studded with gems, and a Saxon sword in a golden scabbard.¹ Eadward by his last will named his eldest son as his successor, and the nobles both of Mercia and Wessex the more willingly confirmed this disposition, as immediately after the death of Eadward his next son, Ælfweard, of uncontested legitimacy, also died when the other sons had not reached the age of manhood, and the younger brother of Eadward, who under such circumstances might have succeeded to the crown, had been dead about two years.² Æthelstan at his accession was thirty years of age. He was crowned at Kingston by the hand of the archbishop of

¹ W. Malm. ii. 6.

² Fl. W. a. 922.

Canterbury, Æthelm,¹ who was probably the son of Æthelred and elder brother of Æthelwold, and consequently a cousin of the king.

His accession did not, however, take place without opposition even in Wessex. At Winchester, a certain Ælfred, with his adherents, had devised the plan of seizing the king and depriving him of sight. On the discovery of the plot, the criminal (whose name as well as his attempt would seem to indicate some relationship to the royal house) was sent to Rome, to clear himself on oath before pope John the Tenth of the crime laid to his charge, a measure only perhaps to be accounted for by the supposition that Ælfred belonged to the church; but which circumstance the monastic chroniclers, as in other like cases, may, for the honour of their order, have thought proper to suppress.² He took the oath before the altar of St. Peter's, and instantly fell, and was borne away by his attendants to the School of the Saxons, where on the third night he expired. This incident served as a complete confirmation of his guilt: at all events, his claims were extinguished by his death, and his ample possessions in the neighbourhood of Malmesbury were, by a decree of the witan, adjudged to the deeply injured king, whose clemency is lauded for allowing to a traitor branded by God a grave among Christians. The donation of Ælfred's lands to the abbey of Malmesbury has, moreover, gained, from the pen of the well-known historian William, a monk of that foundation, the warmest praise for the liberal donor,³ whom ages after he celebrated as the

¹ Fl. W. a. 924.

² W. Malm. ii. 6. "Quidam Elfredus cum factiosis suis." "Elfredus magnæ insolentiæ homo."

³ W. Matm. ii. 6. De Gest. Pont. v.

greatest of the Anglo-Saxon rulers, when Æthelstan's race had long been driven from the country and their pretensions extinguished, and when a kingdom of Wessex no longer existed among European states.

One of the first acts of Æthelstan was the sacrifice to policy of his own sister, whose name has not been transmitted to us, in bestowing her on the Northumbrian prince Sihtric, the brother of Regnald then lately deceased,¹ whose suit for the hand of Ælfwyn the daughter of Æthelflæd, had furnished a pretext for depriving that young princess of her hereditary dominion. Sihtric was baptized, and received Northumbria, or rather Bernicia, from the Tees to Edinburgh—the limit of the Saxon territory and civilization—in vassalage to the king of Wessex, but died within a year, when Æthelstan, availing himself of the favourable opportunity, expelled Guthfrith and Anlaf, the sons of Sihtric by a former marriage, and incorporated that country with his other states. Anlaf fled to Ireland, where Danish princes, his near relatives, ruled, who received him with welcome. Guthfrith, the elder brother, took refuge with Constantine king of Scotland and Eugenius of Cumberland, who, on the demand of Æthelstan, were ready to deliver up the fugitive. With a companion named Turfrith, Guthfrith, however, effected his escape, and shortly after laid siege to York, but finding the citizens deaf both to his threats and promises, he betook himself with his comrade to a neighbouring

¹ Hist. S. Cuthberti ap. Twysden, p. 74, where it is said that he died at the same time as king Eadward. Regnald seems to have gone at that time to France, to have been the chieftain of the Northmen on the banks of the Loire, and to have fallen in the defeat of his countrymen in the pass of Chailles, between La Chapelle and Chambéry. See Frodoardi Chron. aa. 923, 925.

fastness, where he was besieged by a body of West Saxons, whom he contrived to elude by flight. He now passed some time at sea, till he lost his friend Turfrith by shipwreck, when, driven by storms and the hardships attendant on exile, he surrendered himself to Æthelstan, who received the son of his brother-in-law kindly, and entertained him with old Saxon hospitality. But four days had scarcely elapsed when, either from mistrust of Æthelstan's intentions, or urged by the restlessness of his kindred, Guthfrith disappeared, and again, like a fish which is nowhere happy but in its native element,¹ betook himself to the sea and a life of piracy. Æthelstan now caused the fortress constructed by the Danes at York to be demolished, to deprive them for the future of this place of refuge. The spoil found there was divided among his English followers, on which account Æthelstan's munificence has been made a subject of praise, while he appears to have acted conformably to the old Germanic usage, which allowed to the king no larger share than what fell to him by lot.² The administration of Northumbria was conducted by vassals of the king, among whom some Danish, though naturalized, families were included.

The North of Europe began now to pass from the state of fermentation and disorder which had prevailed in all its countries into a more peaceable and orderly condition. The petty kingdoms into which Denmark, Norway and Sweden were divided, and which bore some resemblance to those of the so-called Anglo-Saxon

¹ W. Malm. ii. 6, probably from an historic ballad.

² See in Gregor. Turon. ii. 27, the story of the vase of Soissons, and, for an instance in the eleventh century, see Arnold of Lübeck, i. 27.

Heptarchy,¹ were now being rapidly united into the three great kingdoms of the North under Gorm the Old, Harald Harfagr and Eric. The petty kings of those countries were prevented by weakness from laying any claim to the conquests made by their subjects, or rather kinsmen, in foreign parts, and any intimations to the contrary, to be found in the Danish historians of the middle ages, may safely be ascribed to later political objects, or other motives. The Norwegian fugitives from the iron sceptre of Harald Harfagr were content with the peaceable occupation of Iceland, and by the state of civilization into which they there entered, they have partly compensated for the ravages committed by their kinsmen in the fairer lands of the South. Harald, although regarded as a descendant of Ingvar,² seems to have laid no claim to the north of England. Æthelstan himself is said to have visited his country, to have been on most friendly terms with him, and to have received his son Hakon for education in English manners and accomplishments; and when Hakon, at a later period, after the expulsion of Eric Blodöx, was summoned by the people to ascend the vacant throne of Norway, Æthelstan, as we are told, supported him with his forces.

Although from the general habits of the age, an intimacy between a Norwegian monarch and the king of the land of Germanic and Scandinavian culture does not appear impossible under the given circumstances when a connection of marriage between the princes might have more closely united the two nations, which for some years had been on peaceable terms, yet this sending

¹ Anonym. Roskild. Adam. Brem. ii. 15.

² Of his son, Adam. Brem. (ii. 15) says, "Haquinus ex genere Ingvar et giganteo semine descendens."

of a son to a prince who had proved himself so equivocally disposed as Æthelstan, and who (as was afterwards the case) from a friend to the Northmen might easily become their enemy, bears at least an appearance of great improbability. No English historian mentions Hakon's residence at the court of Æthelstan. Of an intercourse between Harald and Æthelstan some account is, indeed, given by a later Anglo-Norman monk,¹ who relates that the Norwegian king sent as a present to the king of England, by his envoys Helgrim and Osfrith, a ship with a golden beak, a purple sail, and within set round with gilded shields, and that these envoys received royal entertainment and presents from the king at York. The embellishment of this narrative is perfectly characteristic of the ballad followed, if not verbally translated by the above-mentioned writer, who seems to have regarded it as his special calling to convert poetic truth into historic untruth. Had this chronicler, the chief disseminator, if not sometimes the inventor of Æthelstan's glory, known from the same ballad or any other source that story of Hakon, would he not have inserted it in his work? The only authorities then for the tradition are some Northern chroniclers,² of whose poetic sources we are aware, but who,

¹ William of Malmesbury (ii. 6).

² Theodoricus Monach. de Regib. Norw. ap. Langebek, t. v. p. 314. Snorre, Harald's Saga, cc. 41-43. The English historians have omitted to notice that Saxo Grammaticus also (lib. x. p. 476) gives the account of Hakon's education with Æthelstan, and with very instructive additions, as that the latter's object in undertaking that charge was to secure the aid of Harald Harfagr against the Danish king Harald Blátand; though it is well known that Harald Harfagr and Harald Blátand did not reign at the same time. Æthelstan is, moreover, called the son of Edelrad (Æthelred), and the Danish Harald appears as the son of Thyra, daughter of Edelrad, and testamentary heir to England! Ib. p. 469.

nevertheless, should not rashly be cast aside as worthless, without an attempt at further elucidation. Does our mistrust lead us to the right conclusion, if, as on a former occasion, we recognise in Æthelstan not the king of the English (Anglorum), but Guthrum-Æthelstan I. or II. king of the East Angles, to whom Harald (who became king in 863) entrusted his son in his childhood? This explanation can only gain in probability on a closer consideration of the story of Æthelstan's visit to Denmark, whereas it is stated he was in his father's days received by Guthrum, and here we are again deluded by the mistake for Guthrum-Æthelstan of the Dano-English territory.¹

This tradition of Hakon's education at the court of Æthelstan, which has gained him in the history of Norway the name of "Hakon Æthelstan's fostre," or foster-son, acquires importance from the account that Harald's eldest son, Eric Blodöx, who after his father's death reigned some years in Norway, reigned also, after Guthfrith's expulsion, as the vassal of Æthelstan, in England. The most credible account,² however, merely states that being driven from Norway in the year 936, Eric fled to England, where, having been honourably received by the unknown king, he died.

Less questionable than Æthelstan's relations with the North are those which he maintained with the Frankish dominions. No change having taken place in the unhappy condition of his brother-in-law, Charles the Simple, Æthelstan set the example of a policy often followed in later times, by reconciling himself with the real ruler of France, Hugh the Great, count of Paris, the son of Robert the First Duke of Neustria, Burgundy and Franconia, and father of Hugh Capet, and giving

¹ Wallingford, p. 540.

² Theodoric. lib. i.

to him his sister Eadhild in marriage.¹ The fugitive adherents of the unfortunate Charles appear to have gone to Ireland, and, perhaps, he also betook himself thither.² The negotiator was Adalolf, count of Boulogne, son of Baldwin of Flanders and Ælfthryth, a daughter of Ælfred,³ consequently a cousin of Æthelstan, who, in the name of Hugh, brought over innumerable rare and precious gifts, which he displayed before the nobles assembled at Abingdon. Besides relics of inestimable value, among which were a part of the holy cross, and of the crown of thorns set in crystal, there were the sword of Constantine the Great, in the hilt of which was one of the nails of the cross, and on which was inscribed in golden letters the name of its former possessor; the spear of Charles the Great, said to be the identical weapon with which the centurion pierced the side of the Saviour; the banner of St. Maurice the martyr and chief of the Theban legion, by which the above-named emperor in his Spanish wars was wont to break the ranks of the Saracens and put them to flight; noble horses with rich trappings; oriental spices, such as had never before been seen in England; splendid jewels, particularly emeralds; an onyx vase—undoubtedly an antique—of such extraordinary workmanship, that the corn sculptured on it seemed to wave, the vines to bud and the men to move, and so highly polished, that it resembled a mirror.⁴ This description

¹ Ethelw. in Procem. Chron. Frodoardi, a. 926. W. Malm. ii. 6, who confounds Hugh with his son. Hugo Floriac. ap. Bouquet, t. viii. p. 289.

² Annal. Saxo, a. 927.

³ Malmesbury (ii. 6) erroneously says, "filius Baldowini ex filia regis Edwardi Ethelswitha." Cf. Chron. Sithiense ap. Bouquet, t. x. p. 74. The "Brevissima Regum Angliæ Hist." (MS. Hamburg.) rightly adds "comes Bononiæ," which in Malmesbury, its chief source, is wanting.

⁴ W. Malm. ii. 6.

reminds us of the Barberini or Portland vase, and other priceless treasures of art, to which no age has ever shown itself indifferent. The marriage to which this munificence was a prelude was, however, not a happy one. After some years we find Hugh and Æthelstan in hostile opposition to each other; Eadhild died or was divorced childless. Hugh Capet was the son of Hugh the Great by a second marriage contracted in 938, with Hedwig, daughter of Henry the First, king of Germany.

At this period the kingdom possessed a power greater than at any previous time. East Anglia was again united with England and placed under the government of a relation of the royal house of the name of Æthelstan, who, on account of his influence, and perhaps as a ludicrous distinction between him and his royal namesake, was called the half-king.¹ Howel Dda, king of Wales, the celebrated lawgiver of his people, the son of Cadell (ob. 909) and grandson of Roderic the Great,² who after the death of his uncle Anaraut (ob. 915) was the chief of the princes of Wales; Owen (Wer) king of Gwent; Constantine king of Scotland; and Ealdred of Bamborough had formed an alliance against Æthelstan, when they saw that he was becoming powerful after the expulsion of Guthfrith. But the arms of Æthelstan proved victorious, and those princes were compelled to sue for peace at Eamot (Emmet in Northumberland), which was granted, on the renewal

¹ Annal. Rames. c. iii.

² This rectification of the common accounts I owe to the Annal. Camb. aa. 909, 915, and Brut y Tyw. aa. 926, 948. Of the sons of Hemeid of Dimetia, who had formerly claimed Ælfred's protection, Llewarch died in 903, Rostri was beheaded in 904, and thus the kingdom passed to the sons of Rotri Mawr. See Annal. Camb.

of their oaths and pledges, and their renunciation of idolatry (*deofolgeld*).¹ This last condition can, however, apply only to the Scots. The North Welsh now attempted to cast off their subjection to Mercia, on the transfer of the government of that kingdom to Wessex; but Æthelstan compelled them, at a meeting held at Hereford, to pay a yearly tribute of twenty pounds of gold, three hundred pounds of silver, two thousand five hundred head of cattle,²—a tribute larger than had ever been exacted, to which were added a number of hounds and hawks, and a perpetual feudal subjection of those under-kings to the Basileus of Britain. We soon see these tributaries paying considerable sums for their investiture, serving in the army of the English king against their own kin, and attending the witena-gemot of their Germanic superior.³ Æthelstan fixed the Wye as a boundary for the Welsh, and the Tamar for the West Britons, whom he also compelled to abandon the city of Exeter,³ which till then they had possessed in common with the Saxons, such a juxtaposition between the victors and the vanquished being of no uncommon occurrence in that age. Following his father's example, he caused the city to be surrounded by a wall of hewn stone strengthened with towers, under the protection of which the Saxons cultivated the arts of peace so successfully, that Exeter became one of the most frequented and richest marts of the early middle ages.

An alliance with the land of the Old-Saxon is the next event in the reign of Æthelstan to which our

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 926. W. Malm. ii. 6.

² Cf. Pálgrave, i. p. 460.

³ W. Malm. ii. 6. "Cornwallenses . . . ab Excestra, quam ad id temporis æquo cum Anglis jure inhabitabant, cedere compulsi." Id. de Gest. Pont. ii. "Hanc urbem primus rex Ethelstanus in potestatem Anglorum, effugatis Britonibus, redactam turribus insignivit," etc.

attention is directed. Henry the First, surnamed the Fowler, king of the Germans, solicited the hand of a sister of Æthelstan for his son, the subsequently renowned emperor Otto the Great.¹ Æthelstan sent over two of his sisters to Cologne, Eadgyth and Ælfgifu (Adiva), attended by his chancellor Thurecytel, a cousin of the king, the son of Æthelweard, a man who renounced the pleasures of the world and the enjoyment of vast possessions for the sake of guiding in his exalted post, by his wisdom and goodness, the councils of Eadward and the three succeeding kings. Eadgyth became the wife of Otto,² her sister was married to a prince and high official of the court, who is described as possessing a territory near the Alps.³ A part of the 'morgengabe' or marriage-gift of Eadgyth was the city of Magdeburg. She lived sixteen years in happy union with the famed German king, to whom she bore a son named Liudolf (who became estranged from his father on his second marriage and died before him). Of her virtues

¹ Contin. Reginon. a. 930. Wittekind, lib. i., who, as also Ditmar, Sigebert of Gemblours and others, erroneously call her the daughter of Eadmund. Annal. Saxo has the right year. Liudolf, the son of Eadgyth, was 16 years old at the time of her death, on the 26th Jan. 947. Wittekind, lib. iii. Liutprand, de Rebus gestis Imper. et Regum, l. iv. c. 7. An endowment for the benefit of the souls of himself and his beloved Eadgyth was bestowed by Otto on the abbey of Chevreumont near Liège. See Charter of 947 in Miræi Opp. Diplom. t. i. p. 504. According to Wittekind, Eadgyth lived nineteen years in Saxony; she must consequently have arrived there not later than 929, as it is stated in Annal. Quedlinb. h. a. (ap. Pertz, t. iii.)

² A.D. 930.

³ W. Malm. ii. 5, 6. Will no chronicler, no document ever impart to us the name and territory of Otto's brother-in-law? He may have been a prince of Burgundy, Lenzburg or Kiberg. The charters of the abbey of Einsiedeln may possibly contain this information. Roswitha expressly names Adiva as the younger sister.

we possess a noble record from a female pen in the harmonious verses of Roswitha.¹

Eadgifu, the youngest and fairest of Æthelstan's sisters, was married to a prince called by the English chroniclers Louis of Aquitaine,² who by modern writers is supposed to be the king of Lower Burgundy or Provence of that name.³ But this prince reigned too early to be regarded as the consort of Eadgifu, and our ignorance of Guienne during that period deprives us of all ground for doubting the existence of a prince Louis of Aquitaine, though the requisite illustration from French historians is much to be wished for, in order better to enable us to estimate the doubtful fidelity of the accounts relative to Æthelstan.

While the power and reputation of the king were daily increasing throughout Europe, in consequence of such brilliant alliances, he was unremitting in his endeavours, by a liberal distribution to the monasteries, not only of his own country but of foreign parts, of the wealth he had acquired by conquest or otherwise, to provide both for his earthly glory and for the eternal salvation of his soul. It is related that an honourable mission was sent by him to many of the monasteries of Switzerland, particularly to the Scottish abbey of St. Gall, and that Æthelstan, by his envoy Cynewold bishop of Worcester, was admitted among the spiritual brotherhood of that cloister.⁴

¹ De Gestis Odonis, p. 165.

² W. Malm. ii. 6.

³ So Scheidt (see Orig. Guelfic. iv. p. 391 sq.), who regards Adiva and Elgive as the same daughter of Eadward, but does not remove the chronological difficulty.

⁴ See J. v. Müller, Geschichte der Schweiz, Bd. i. c. 12, who in note 269 cites a MS. document of Æthelstan of 929. The see of bishop Cynewold I find in Fl. W. aa. 929, 957, and Malmesb. de Pont. lib. iv.

But no merits, no exertions were sufficient to obliterate the injurious stain which in the eyes of his prejudiced countrymen was attached to the birth of Æthelstan, and which, through his efforts to remove it, only appeared the greater. Eadwine, the eldest son of his father's undoubtedly lawful marriage, had attained the age of manhood, and youthful indiscretion if not love of a faithful people, or, perhaps, mere restless fear on the part of the usurper, excited the suspicion that he cherished thoughts of rule. Eadwine, both personally and through the medium of friends, assured his brother of his fidelity; he asserted his innocence on oath, but in vain. Æthelstan commanded him and his armour-bearer (who must have been implicated in the charge) to be sent out to sea in an old crazy boat without oars or rowers. Driven by the fury of the wind and waves, and weary of life, the ætheling, in a paroxysm of despair, cast himself into the ocean; his companion by great efforts succeeded in rescuing the corpse of his master, which, by rowing with his hands and feet, he brought to shore near Witsand on the coast of France.¹ However extraordinary this sort of punishment may appear, which exposes the judge to the vengeance of the criminal, should he by any chance escape from death, it is, nevertheless, in perfect keeping with the spirit of a time that left so much to the so-called judgments of God, which, though devised to mitigate the barbarism of the age, might also shelter the murderer under the cloak of

¹ Sax. Chron. Chron. Mailr. a. 933. H. Hunt. merely mentions that Eadwine perished at sea. Sim. Dunelm. "rex Ethelstanus jussit Eadwinum, fratrem suum, submergi in mare." Malmesbury doubts the murder, on account of Æthelstan's affection for his other brothers.

justice and religion.¹ Æthelstan either felt or affected great remorse for the foul misdeed; a penance of seven years was undergone by him, in the hope of destroying the worm that gnawed his heart; and the thoughtless jest of his cup-bearer who, it is said, had referred to the deed he would willingly have forgotten, cost that officer his life.²

Æthelstan was the more sensible of the necessity of securing tranquillity at home, as he saw the storm gathering which threatened him from the North. In the autumn of the year 934, Constantine, king or—as he is designated with reference to his feudal superior of England—under-king of Scotland, attended a witenagemot at Buckingham, and on his return the revolt broke out. Eocha (Owen, Eugenius) was at that time king of Cumberland, in virtue of a disposition of Constantine, by which Cumberland was assigned to the tanaist, or presumptive heir of the Scottish crown till his accession to the latter kingdom. This prince now leagued himself with Constantine, to fight both in his own cause and that of his future kingdom; but Æthelstan with his army marched into Scotland, which he laid waste to Dunfoeder and Wertermore, while his fleet ravaged the coast as far as Caithness. Constantine was now again compelled to submit to the king of England, to whom he sent his son as a hostage with many presents;

¹ Similar instances are those of Cynethryth, the queen of Offa, and Björn the murderer of Lodbrog. Bromton, a. 804.

² Malmesbury (ii. 6) informs us, that as he was serving wine his foot having slipped, he recovered himself with the other, saying, "Thus brother helps brother." A similar story is told of Eadward the Confessor: the charge against Æthelstan is not, however, on that account to be considered groundless.

and peace being thus restored, Æthelstan returned to Wessex.

Æthelstan's attention was now powerfully attracted towards France. For several years the Bretons had been striving to cast off the yoke of the Normans, and Eadward's ward, Alan, surnamed *Barba torta*, returned with Æthelstan's consent to his country.¹ His first endeavours, in the year 931, to restore the independence of his nation seem not to have been successful, but on the death of Radolf (Raoul), the usurper of the French throne, in 936, the affairs of France assumed another aspect. Æthelstan's nephew, Louis d'Outremer, the son of Charles the Simple, who died in 929, had been recalled by a deputation from the united chiefs of his kingdom, at the head of which was the archbishop of Sens. This decisive step had been caused by Æthelstan, through his embassies and presents to the powerful duke of Normandy, William the First.² Between the hands of Æthelstan and Eadgifu, the dignitaries took the oath of allegiance; Louis with a splendid train sailed for Boulogne, and was shortly after crowned king of the Franks.³ Æthelstan did not now abandon his nephew, but by his powerful support contributed to maintain him on his tottering throne, which had been assailed by the combined forces of his brother-in-law, the German king Otto, who had ascended the throne at the same time with Louis, and of Hugh, who, after the death of Eadhild, had married Hedwig, a sister of Otto. English

¹ Frodoardi Chron. aa. 931, 936, 937. Hugo Floriac. Chron. Namnet. ap. Bouquet, t. viii. p. 276. "Britones a transmarinis regionibus, Alstani regis præsidio revertentes."

² Dudo, lib. iv. p. 95. Bouquet, t. viii. p. 304. Hugo Floriac. ib. p. 319. Gul. Gemet. iii. c. 4.

³ Chron. Odorani. Chron. Verdun. Bouquet, viii. 237, 290. Frodoard, iv. c. 26.

warriors were probably present at the capture of Montreuil, by Arnulf count of Flanders, a cousin of Æthelstan, when the wife of count Herluin, who was made prisoner there with her sons, was sent to Æthelstan. In the following year the English fleet attempted, but without any great success, to support Louis' adherents on the northern coasts of France, but Æthelstan soon after saw his nephew—by his marriage with Gerberge, another of Otto's sisters and widow of Gisbert, the lately deceased duke of Lorraine—firmly established on the throne of France, and Alan settled in his dukedom.¹ The sequel of the life of Eadgifu, the mother of Louis, redounds little to her honour. Having formed an attachment to the count of Meaux, the son of the count of Vermandois, who had deprived her consort of his throne, she caused him, as it were by violence, to carry her off. They were subsequently married, but Louis, justly provoked by such flagrant conduct, seized on his mother and committed her to the custody of his queen.²

The opportunity of profiting by Æthelstan's participation in the affairs of Europe was not neglected by his conquered, although never humbled enemies in the north of England. Anlaf (Olaf), a son of Guthfrith,³ had married a daughter of Constantine

¹ Frodoard, aa. 938, 939.

² Frodoard, a. 951.

³ By Malmesbury and others the Anlaf who fought at Brunanburh is called the son of Sihtric, but the death of this Anlaf is recorded in the Sax. Chron. and H. Hunt. under the year 942, while the son of Sihtric was living as late as 944, as is evident from the following testimonies: Sim. Dunelm., after mentioning (a. 941) that "*filius Sihtrici nomine Onlaf regnavit super Northanhymbros*" informs us (a. 943) that "*Northumbri regem suum Onlaf de regno expulerunt*." H. Hunt. is even more explicit: he says (a. 942), "*Eo in tempore obiit rex Anlaf, de quo prædiximus; postea vero*

king of Scotland. Through this union the plan may necessarily have suggested itself of a Dano-Northumbrian kingdom, which might serve as a wall of defence for the independence both of Scotland and Cumberland. An extensive combination of the Danes in England and Ireland with the Scots and the kindred states was consequently formed against Æthelstan. With six hundred and fifteen ships Anlaf arrived in the Humber from Ireland,¹ and united his forces with those of his father-in-law Constantine, Owen of Cumberland and many princes of British race. Æthelstan, who was well skilled in the art of deceiving his enemies by negotiation, made use of the time thereby gained to place himself in a condition to oppose them with a well-appointed army. The courage and craft of Anlaf are acknowledged by his enemies. In the guise of a harper he gained admission into the camp of Æthelstan, where he played before the king and his guests during their repast, and was enabled during his stay to gather the information he sought. Disdaining the hireling's reward that had been bestowed on him by Æthelstan, he buried it in the earth. While engaged in this operation, he was observed and recognised by a soldier who had formerly served under him. The man instantly communicated his discovery to the king, who on upbraiding him for not having betrayed the Dane the instant that he recognised him, received for answer, "King! the same oath that I have taken to you I took to Anlaf; had I violated it, you might have expected similar perfidy towards yourself: but deign to listen to your

rex Eadmundus suscepit *quendam alium Anlaf*, regem Dacorum, in baptismate." And (a. 944) "reges prædicti Dacorum, scilicet Anlaf *filius Sidrici* et Reginaldus filius Gudferdi, fregerunt pacem," etc.—T.

¹ Sim. Dunelm. a. 937.

servant's advice; move your tent to some other spot, and there await in patience the arrival of your reinforcements." The king followed the soldier's counsel. In the evening Werstan, bishop of Sherborne, arrived with a body of forces, and established his quarters in the place previously occupied by the king. During the night Anlaf entered the camp, where his first victims were the bishop and all his attendants. Following up his success, Anlaf next attacked the quarters of the king, who, being awakened by the tumult, succeeded after a severe conflict in repelling the assailants.¹

Two days after the above-mentioned event, was fought the great and memorable battle of Brunanburh² in Northumberland, one of the most celebrated conflicts of the middle ages, in which was manifested to the utmost all the intenseness of hate existing between the contending nations. The Saxon chronicler, disdaining the simple language of prose in recounting the glorious achievements of his heroes, Æthelstan and his brother Eadmund, has recourse to song,³ and from his verses later annalists have chiefly drawn their accounts of this famous battle. Five kings, among whom Eli-genius, an under-king of Deira, is named, seven jarls of the Danes and their allies, a son of the Scottish king Constantine, slain by the hand of the valiant chancellor Thureytel, by whom the citizens of London and a body of Mercians under Singin were led to the conflict,

¹ W. Malm. ii. 6, and De Gestis Pont. lib. ii.

² Simeon calls the battle-place Wendun.—T.

³ Sax. Chron. a. 937 (938). The best version of the metrical account of the battle of Brunanburh is that by Price in his edition of Warton's H. E. P., particularly in that of 1840, vol. i. p. lxvi., though encumbered with an abundance of frivolous and wholly useless annotations.—T.

besides an almost countless number of warriors, are said to have fallen. Constantine and Anlaf fled to their ships.¹ Among the slain on the English side were Ælfwine and Æthelwine, brothers of Thurecytel and cousins of Æthelstan. No greater carnage, says the poet, had ever taken place in the island since those proud warsmiths, the Angles and the Saxons from the East, first came over the broad sea to Britain. According to the Scandinavian accounts of the battle of Brunanburh, on which, however, no implicit reliance can be placed, some Northern mercenaries, led by Egil and Thorolf, were in the pay of Æthelstan, who, by annihilating the Irish auxiliaries, had mainly contributed to the victory; and, if credit may be given to Egil's Saga, Eric Blodöx, the son of Harald Harfagr had, some time before the battle of Brunanburh, been invested by Æthelstan with the kingdom of Northumbria, on condition of defending it against Scots and Irish and receiving baptism.² Yet on this point not only are all the English chroniclers silent, but there occurred, ten years later, under the second successor of Æthelstan, an event hereafter to be mentioned, which appears to have occasioned the cession to him of that country.

Æthelstan died in the year 940, "on the twenty-

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 937. Annal. Ulton. a. 936.

² Johnstone, *Antiq. Celto-Scandicæ*. Egil's Saga, 4to, 1809. P. E. Müller, *Sagabibliothek*, Bd. i. s. 114. The story of Eric Blodöx is given also in Snorre, *Saga of Hakon the Good*, cc. 3, 4, and in Torfæi *Hist. Norweg.* lib. iv. c. 7. Theodoric (*De Regibus Norweg.*) says only that after his expulsion he "ad Angliam navigavit, et a rege honorifice susceptus, ibidem diem obiit." According to the 'drápa,' or panegyric, composed by command of his queen Gunhild, he fell in a piratical expedition against England. See Torfæus, lib. iv. c. 10. *Sagabibliothek*, Bd. ii. p. 373. Lange's *Heldensage*.

seventh of October.¹ Of his person we are informed, by an eye-witness, that he was of middle stature and slender, his hair yellow, in which golden threads were beautifully entwined. He was eminently distinguished for courage and munificence, virtues which have never failed to gain for their possessor the love of the people and the clergy. The illegitimacy of his birth, as well as the complaints against his government were forgotten, the former the more readily as he left no son to inherit the throne. He was buried with great pomp at Malmesbury.²

Notwithstanding his wars and extensive foreign relations, Æthelstan did not neglect the internal administration of his kingdom, and has left proofs of his conviction, that on this mainly depend the strength and well-being of a state. Our attention is the more particularly directed to his laws, as they do not, like many of those of preceding Anglo-Saxon kings, consist chiefly in records of older customary, or common law, but in new enactments, calculated to uphold the ancient order of things, and, consequently, supply a very instructive picture of the condition of the country at that period. The numerous wars and the mixture of many races had given birth to much lawlessness and disorder, among which refusal to pay taxes, poverty, robbery and neglect in the administration of justice were particularly prominent. The payment of tithes, of soul-money and of plough-alms was therefore rigidly enjoined, default in which was punishable as a crime against the king himself. Æthelstan directed provision to be made for one poor

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. Sim. Dunelm. W. Malm. Chron. Mailros., also in the Calendarium of the church of Merseburg.

² W. Malm. ii. 6.

Englishman on every two of his farms, also the redemption of a wite-theow, or one who from debt or misdeeds had fallen into a state of slavery. He also re-enacted with modifications his father's ordinances respecting bargains within the town-gate, for the security of trade, for which he further provided by laws regarding the coinage and coining, and the legal proof in purchases. The reparation of fortresses, weapons, and horses, are the objects of his care in these laws. But the most important of his enactments are those directed against the numerous individuals who wandered about the country without either property or a lord (hlaforð) to answer for them, or who, in other words, were wanting in the two qualifications, by virtue of which alone every man of the commonalty was considered a member of the state. The kindred of such persons were commanded to place them, according to the law of the land (fole-riht), under a lord, who, in the event of their being accused, should present them to justice. Closely connected with the above were his provisions against theft, which seems to have been regarded as nearly synonymous with vagrancy; and also against delinquency on the part of the lord.

A consequence of these legal institutions was the smaller association, grafted, as it were, on the old system of frankpledge, formed by the inhabitants of the country for the protection of property, and its recovery if stolen. We possess the statutes of the Gild of London, framed by the bishops and reeves, which, with reference to earlier associations, informs us in detail, with what severity the smallest thefts were punished, even when committed by boys of twelve years of age; and of the establishment of an assurance fund, under the superintendence of the members of the gild, for the

purpose of indemnifying losses by robbery. Of this brotherhood the members were divided into groups of ten, which groups were united by tens under their respective chiefs or directors, who assembled monthly at a common refection, the remains of which were distributed among the poor. Each member contributed a sum yearly for the general objects of the gild, and on the death of a member gave a loaf, and sang, or procured to be sung, a "quinguagenarium" of psalms for the repose of his soul. In cases of stolen property they summoned the reeve of the shire to trace the thief beyond his jurisdiction, when the reeve of the shire into which he was traced was to take up the pursuit, and so, from shire to shire, until the thief was captured. The property of a convicted thief, after deduction of the value of the thing stolen, was to be divided into two; one half was to be assigned to his wife, if not privy to the theft, the other half to be equally divided between the king and the gild.¹

From what we have stated, it will without doubt appear manifest, that this and similar institutions were little else than modifications of the old system of frankpledge, rendered necessary at a time when, in consequence of the advance in civilization, less dependence was placed on the old family responsibility than on such new civic unions as the gilds, or *hansen*. Notwithstanding the obscurity attending some clauses of these statutes, the object of which was security to every man's hearth, they well deserve attention as one of the oldest gild-enactments, out of which the aristocratic civic institution, at a later period, developed itself, and, therefore, as one of the most important and most ancient

¹ Laws of Æthelstan, particularly 'Judicia Civitatis Lundoniæ in Anc. LL. and Inst.

records of the autonomy (by-laws)¹ of the Anglo-Saxon cities. But this document would be of predominant interest, if it should be considered as tending to show the relative position of the commonalty, and their representation in the assembly of the noble and free. This hypothesis involves no inconsistency with other accounts to be noticed, when treating of the oldest provincial constitutions, but serves, on the contrary, not indeed to establish, but to illustrate, the well-known tradition, according to which the English towns founded the right of sending deputies to the Lower House on charters of king Æthelstan, especially on one granted to the town of Beverley, after the battle of Brunanburh.²

¹ See Wilda, *Gildenwesen*, p. 246. Palgrave, i. p. 197.

² According to Ingulf, Æthelstan, when on his way to encounter his enemies in the north, was met by several pilgrims, on their return from the shrine of St. John at Beverley, when influenced by their narratives relating to the miracles of the saint, he resolved on visiting the place himself; and there offered his dagger on the altar, promising that, if God granted him victory, he would redeem it at a worthy price. On his return from the field of Brunanburh he redeemed it with the grant of those privileges which the place now enjoys, and with other almost innumerable gifts.—See the spurious metrical grant of these privileges in *Monast. Anglic. t. ii. p. 129*, and *Cod. Diplom. ii. p. 186.—T.*

CHAPTER VIII.

A.D. 941-959.

Eadmund I.—War with Anlaf—Treaty of Peace—Baptism of Anlaf—War with British and Scottish Princes—Assassination of King—His Family—Laws—Eadred succeeds his Brother, 946-955—Rebellion of Northumbria—Anlaf—Eric—Archbishop Wulfstan deposes Thurcytel—Eadwig, 955-959—Struggle between Church and Crown—Contest with Dunstan—Dunstan's History and Character—Weakness of King—Rebellion of Mercia—Sufferings and Murder of Eadwig's Queen—Mortification and Death of King.

ON the death of Æthelstan, the ætheling Eadmund, king Eadward's eldest surviving son by his last marriage, then about eighteen years of age, and who three years before had already given proofs of his valour in the field of Brunanburh, succeeded to the vacant throne. To the Scots and Danes, the hereditary foes of the country, whom the dreaded sword of Æthelstan alone had held in check, the transition of the crown to a youthful head presented a welcome opportunity of revolt. Anlaf was called from Ireland by the Northumbrians, and chosen to be their king.¹ The Danes of Mercia, and probably those also of East Anglia, immediately attached themselves to the chieftain of their race, and it was by slow degrees, and in a part only of the revolted provinces, that Eadmund could obtain an acknowledgment of his authority. Even Wulfstan, the archbishop of York, enrolled himself among the partisans of the pagan Dane

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 941.

from motives of selfish policy, which have been passed over in silence by his clerical brethren.¹ At Tamworth Eadmund sustained a defeat, notwithstanding which he succeeded in reducing to subjection Mercia and the well fortified Five Burghs (Derby, Lincoln, Nottingham, Stamford and Leicester). In Leicester Anlaf and the faithless archbishop Wulfstan were besieged by Eadmund, from which place, however, they effected their escape by night;² when, through the influence of Oda archbishop of Canterbury (the son of a Dane, who had fought against Ælfred),³ and Wulfstan, a treaty was concluded, according to which all the country to the north of the Watling street was ceded in sovereignty to Anlaf,⁴ whose first wife, the daughter of Constantine, must have been dead at this time, as we find mention of his marriage with Alditha, a daughter of his faithful counsellor, jarl Orm.⁵ Shortly after these events Anlaf died,⁶ and with terror of his sword his entire power seems to have sunk, which, since the death of Æthelstan, had been so destructive to the country. After the death of the elder Anlaf the kingdom of Northumbria was governed by Anlaf the son of Sihtric, and Regnald the son of Guthfrith, the latter of whom ruled over the

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 943. One MS. only of the Chronicle (Cott. Tib. B. iv.) contains this passage; the Latin chroniclers have also excluded it. Malmesbury (*De Gestis Pontif.* iii.) speaks of Wulfstan's punishment by Eadmund which, however, took place only under Eadred: "*Hic (Wlstanus) tempore regis Eadmundi . . . iram ejus emeritus, quod Danis contra eum rebellantibus faveret, ita quietum et benignum excitavit animum, ut eum in vincula conjiceret,*" etc.

² Sim. Dunelm. a. 939. Sax. Chron. a. 943; this latter date is irreconcilable with the other events.—T.

³ Malmesb. *de Gestis Pont.* lib. i.

⁴ Sim. Dunelm. a. 939. Sax. Chron. (erroneously) 943.

⁵ Matt. Westm. a. 940. R. Wendover, t. i. p. 395.

⁶ Sax. Chron. H. Hunt. a. 942.

southern portion, and was in possession of York.¹ Anlaf, constrained apparently by the superior power of Eadmund, received baptism, and, shortly after, his example was followed by Regnald.² Their reign in Northumbria was, however, of no long duration, for, having violated their engagements and devastated the neighbouring country, they were expelled by Eadmund, when the country was again reduced under the sway of the king of Wessex.³

In the following year Eadmund was still more fortunate, when, aided by a Welsh army,⁴ he made war on Dunwallon (Doncheall, Donald) king of Cumbria, the son of Owen, the hereditary enemy of his house. He overcame him,⁵ gave Cumbria to its former feudal lord Malcolm the First, the son of Constantine the Third of Scotland (who, after the battle of Brunanburh, had retired into a monastery), under the condition of military service by sea and land. On this account, as well as from the circumstance above-mentioned of the dissolution of his family connection with his brother-in-law Anlaf, it is probable that Malcolm, being sensible that a powerful Danish prince, even if he separated him from England, might, nevertheless, be dangerous to his own kingdom, took no part against Eadmund in the last wars. Malcolm granted Cumbria to his tanaist Indulf, who took and kept the oath of fealty to Eadmund and his successor; nor during the remainder of the

¹ Sim. Dunelm. a. 941. H. Hunt. a. 942.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 943. H. Hunt. a. 942.

³ Sim Dunelm. aa. 943, 945.

⁴ Matt. Westm. a. 946. R. Wend. t. i. p. 398. "adjutorio Leolini, regis Demetiæ fretus." Deheubarth was at that time governed by Howel Dda.

⁵ Matthew of Westm. and Wendover relate that Eadmund caused the two sons of Dunwallon to be deprived of sight.—T.

century did these renewed relations suffer interruption.¹ Dunwallon, who lived thirty years after these events, and died on a pilgrimage to Rome, appears to have continued in possession of the northern or Scottish Strathclyde,—which for some centuries after maintained itself in independence,—and to have been succeeded by a son named Anderach, who was followed by a second son of Dunwallon, named, like his grandfather, Owen.²

Eadmund was engaged in a negotiation with his brother-in-law, Hugh the Great, concerning the liberation of his nephew, king Louis, whom the latter held in ignominious captivity, when his life, after a reign of only six years, was brought to a violent close. He was celebrating the feast of St. Augustine, archbishop of Canterbury, at Pucklechurch in Gloucestershire, when an outlaw named Leofa, whom the king had banished for his robberies, had the audacity, after an exile of six years, to appear at the royal table and seat himself near the king, who on perceiving the intruder made a sign to his cup-bearer to remove him from the palace, and on his offering resistance, rushed towards him, and seizing him by the hair, dashed him to the ground, when the outlaw, drawing a dagger which he had concealed, plunged it into the breast of Eadmund, who instantly expired. The assassin was cut to pieces on the spot by the royal guards.³ Eadmund was twice married; his first wife was Ælfgifu, the mother of his

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. H. Hunt. a. 945. W. Malm. Annal. Camb. a. 946. Fordun. iv. 26.

² See hereafter, a. 973. Innes, Critical Essay, p. 802. Brut y Tyw. a. 974. Annal. Camb. aa. 990, 1015. Sim. Dunelm. a. 1018, where "Eugenius Calvus, rex Lutinensium" (Clutinensium?) may be a grandson of Dunwallon.

³ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. Chron. Frodoardi, a. 946. W. Malm. ii. 7. R. Wendover, t. i. p. 398.

sons Eadwig and Eadgar, who afterwards ascended the throne, a lady whose virtues in relieving the poor and in redeeming of slaves have obtained for her the appellation of saint.¹ At the time of his death he was married to Æthelflæd of Domesham, daughter of Ælfgar, ealdorman of the Wilsætas.² He was buried at Glastonbury.³

Several of Eadmund's legal enactments, both ecclesiastical and secular, have been preserved,⁴ but they present nothing whereby greatly to interest the general reader. New and well-weighed laws cannot be the work of a young warrior constantly in arms, and it is chiefly in this character that Eadmund rapidly passed over the historic stage.

EADRED.

In consequence of the youth of Eadmund's sons at the time of his assassination, his younger brother Eadred, by the election of the witan, was called to the succession, and was crowned at Kingston by Oda, archbishop of Canterbury.⁵ The ceremony did not, however, take place till three months after his accession, owing either to some doubt in regard to the election, or more probably

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 955. "Eadwius... sanctæ Alfgivæ reginæ filius." Nevertheless in a charter of Eadmund (Text. Roffens.) she styles herself "Ælfifu concubina regis." She died in 948; her death is recorded in the A.-S. Calendar on the 5th of May. See also Ethelwerd, iv. 6. [Among the numerous charters of Eadmund her name appears but once, and after those of the bishops, while that of his mother, Eadgifu, is affixed to several, and stands in general immediately after that of his brother Eadred. See Cod. Diplom. t. ii.—T.]

² Sax. Chron. aa. 946, 962.

³ W. Malm. ii. 7.

⁴ See Anc. LL. and Inst. of England.

⁵ Fl. W. a. 946. [In his first charter the dominions of Eadred are thus designated: "Regna Angulsaxna et Northhymbra, Paganorum, Bretonumque." See Cod. Diplom. ii. p. 268.—T.]

on account of the difficulty of securing the presence of electors, living at remote distances.

Eadred's first military expedition was against the Northumbrians, who, it appears, had manifested a disposition to throw off their allegiance. At the head of a numerous army he invaded their country, which he soon reduced to submission, and at Taddenescyld received pledges of fidelity and obedience from archbishop Wulfstan, the witan, and all the Northumbrians, which they, however, soon belied. Hence he proceeded into Scotland, where he met with no resistance, and received oaths of submission both from the Scots and the Cumbrians;¹ but on his return to the south, the Northumbrians, no longer awed by his presence, set up for their king the fugitive Anlaf, Sihtric's son, who had returned with a powerful fleet and been joyfully received by his countrymen in Northumbria. After having, as it is said, for four years maintained his authority in that kingdom, or, more probably, in a part of it only, Anlaf was expelled by the treachery of his people, who set up as king Eric (Hiring Hyryc), a son of the Danish king, Harald Blátand, who had been sent by his father for the purpose of conquering the country.²

¹ Sax. Chron. aa. 946, 947. Fl. W. 946, 949, who adds, "*nam quendam Danica stirpe progenitum, Ircum nomine, super se regem levaverunt.*" The elevation of Eric is placed by the Sax. Chron. in 952. H. Hunt. a. 947.

² Adam of Brem. ii. 15. "*Haraldus . . in Anglos suam dilatavit potentiam,*" etc., and, "*Haraldus Hiring filium suum misit in Angliam, qui, subacta insula a Northumbris, tandem proditus et occisus est.*" Cf. Chron. Erii. The English historians must have overlooked these passages, when they unanimously make this Eric, the son already mentioned of Harald Hárfagr, king of Norway. The Icelandic fragment (Fornm. Sögur, Bd. xi. p. 418), cited by Turner in favour of his view, is, as it acknowledges, an excerpt from Adam of Bremen.

On the news of these events Eadred returned to Northumbria, which he ravaged, and at Ripon burnt the celebrated minster, the structure of bishop Wilfrith. On his return he was attacked by the Northumbrians at Chesterford, and suffered great loss. When about to retrace his steps and wreak his vengeance on the faithless people, they hastened to appease him by fresh assurances of fidelity, the expulsion of their king Eric, and an adequate compensation.¹ Through the treachery of the eorl Osulf,² Eric, with his son Henry and his brother Regnald, was slain in the wilds of Stanmore by the hand of Maccus, the son of Anlaf. The faithless archbishop Wulfstan was now deposed, and closely confined at Jedburgh, but after the expiration of a year or two was released and appointed to the see of Dorchester. Many of the Danish "holds" and nobles were imprisoned, and the two former kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira, under the title of an earldom, were bestowed as a reward on Osulf, in whose race, the country of Northumberland strictly so called, as detached from Yorkshire and the Lothians, continued till the period of the Norman

¹ Sax. Chron. aa. 948, 952, where the dates are lamentably confused, the reception of Eric being recorded under the latter, and his expulsion under the former! The return of Anlaf is also placed under 949 (where he is surnamed Cwiran, and appears to be identical with the Amlaf Cuarran mentioned in the Annals of Ulster, aa. 944, 946), and his expulsion in 952. [Gaimar (v. 3549 sq.) mentions Anlaf Cwiran :

"Quant il regnout el secund an, Norhumberlant seisi e prist,
Idunckes vint Anlaf Quiran, Ne trovat ki li defendist."

According to Olaf Tryggvason's Saga (Bd. i. p. 149) he was king of Dublin. See also Fl. W. Sim. Dunelm. aa. 948, 950. H. Hunt. a. 949.—T.]

² "Osulf heah-gerefa." Cod. Diplom. ii. p. 269.

conquest.¹ A great number of Danes had settled in this country, as is evident from local names, as well as from many traces of political institutions, traditions and Northern idioms, still preserved in that part of the island.

The defence of the regained territory seems to have claimed the entire attention of Eadred during the remainder of his short career. He had long been afflicted with a painful disease;² accompanied by weakness in his feet; much, therefore, of the energy displayed in his reign may probably be ascribed to two sagacious counsellors, his cousin and chancellor Thurecytel, and the celebrated abbot of Glastonbury, Dunstan. On the reduction of Northumbria Thurecytel renounced the world, and retired to the abbey of Crowland.

This eminent individual was the eldest son of Æthelweard, the brother of king Eadward the Elder. His habits of sanctity and love of celibacy had pointed him out to his uncle as a fitting person to fill the highest dignities in the church; but these when offered he constantly declined, regarding them as snares of Satan for the subversion of souls. Eadward now resolved on turning the talents of Thurecytel to account in the way most congenial to his own wishes, and made him his chancellor, which post he filled in a manner equally honourable to himself and beneficial to the country,

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. aa. 950, 952. Sim. Dunelm (C. H. p. 687, *note*). H. Hunt. a. 954. Matt. Westm. a. 950. R. Wendover, t. i. p. 402. Under the names of Henry and Regnald it is extremely probable, as Mr. Turner remarks, that the Harekr and Rögnvaldr mentioned by Snorre in Hakon's Saga indicate two of the kings who fell with Eric Blodöx in the battle with Eadmund.

² Vita S. Dunstani in Acta Sanctorum, p. 353.

under the three successors of Eadward, and at the battle of Brunanburh, as we have already related, mainly contributed to the victory. We have seen him accompanying the sisters of Æthelstan to the continent; we next find him procuring by his counsel the restoration of the destroyed monasteries, and the erection and decoration of churches and altars. Being sent by Eadred on a mission to archbishop Wulfstan, for the purpose of retaining that rebellious prelate in his duty, his way lay by the ruined abbey of Crowland, at that time the shelter of three aged monks; here he was induced to stop and partake of such hospitality as their slender means afforded. On his return he again visited Crowland, and afterwards obtained the king's promise to aid in the good work of restoring the venerable foundation, into which, notwithstanding the dissuasions of the king, he resolved to enter as one of the brotherhood. A few days after, he caused to be announced in the streets of London by a crier, that he was ready to pay every debt, and if he had wronged any one, to make him threefold compensation. Of sixty manors belonging to him he gave fifty-four to the king, and the tenth, or six manors, to Crowland. On a visit to that abbey he was accompanied by the king, from whose hands he received the pastoral staff, and on the following day the brothers resigned the monastery with all its possessions into the hands of the sovereign, who immediately ordered the complete restoration of the establishment, and, in a council held shortly after at London, regranted in his charter the monastery to Thurcytel as abbot, and his monks. The lands and villages which had been alienated by the Mercian king Burhred, he regained for the foundation, either by compounding with the possessors, or through

cession by the king of those that had been retained by the crown. With its possessions, its privileges were likewise restored to the abbey, excepting that of sanctuary, which was refused, lest it should appear to afford an asylum to criminals from the penalty of the law. Many men of learning accompanied Thurecytel to his cloister, ten of whom adopted the regular life, and at his death, which took place in the year 975, the society consisted of forty-seven monks and four lay brothers. (*Inglph.*)

Eadred died at Frome on the twenty-sixth of November, in the year 955, probably unmarried, and certainly without leaving heirs, and was buried at Winchester.¹

EADWIG.

On the death of Eadred, his nephew Eadwig, the son of his brother Eadmund, was by the witan of Wessex and Mercia elected to fill the vacant throne.² The short reign of this handsome and frivolous young prince is distinguished by an almost incredible act of atrocity, partly the effect of his own imprudence, which rivets our attention in a far greater degree by the circumstance, that the kingdom during that period was made a field of contention, on which opposing views of church and state impelled their respective adherents to wage war against each other with the deadliest hate. Whilst in our own times the thoughts of men are moved with restless excitement by every wind that

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 955. At the Easter festival of 949, Eadred's envoys are mentioned as present at the court of his brother-in-law the emperor Otto, at Aix-la-Chapelle. Of the object of their mission we are uninformed. Frodoardi Chron. h. a.

² Bridferth. lib. i. c. 4. "in utraque plebe regum numeros nominaque suppleret electus . . . Cum ab universis Anglorum principibus communi electione ungeretur et consecraretur in regem."

blows, and no idea is valued that does not shine or mislead under some new and attractive garb, in the middle ages men were bound together in one great spiritual gild, the aim of which was to strengthen or develope a few opinions, which by the lapse of time had been at once ennobled and obscured. Hence, even where the most strongly marked individuality seemed to separate the actors from their immediate surroundings, we perceive a striking resemblance in essential points among the actors, who played their parts on a stage, where a powerful but effeminate descendant of some small northern chief claiming descent from Odin, found himself suddenly confronted with a representative of the fisherman of Rome, the shepherd of the Christian flock. Such contests were unequal, for the Churchman was always the superior of the prince in astuteness, and not often his inferior in wisdom; and the misery and disquiet brought upon the smaller and more easily shaken world of that epoch, by the changing fortunes of these conflicts, were far greater than any the olden times had seen. But although they depended in all lands on the same contending principles and passions, and ever recur under nearly one and the same mask, it is on that account all the more imperative carefully to separate, from their general characteristics, the individual differences that are due to the special differences of the several countries.

Although these contests generally everywhere began in a struggle between the head of the state and the leader of culture, it was not possible that in a country like Britain, where the ancient church of the land and that of the Scots possessed a special intellectual wealth of its own, the introduction of Catholic views could be followed by the establishment of Romish ascendancy,

until those national church-institutions had been dissolved. The greater distance which separated the English kings from the secular and personal influence of the head of the church prevented the rapid formation of such relations with Rome, as those cemented with peoples who had never ceased to use the speech and law of the city of the world; and who continued to honour and to seek under the dome of St. Peter's the highest earthly power, as they had once sought it in the triumphs of the capitol. Since the complete establishment of Christianity no very important contest had, therefore, broken out in England between church and state, and still less had any English king and ecclesiastic stood forth as the champions of two opposite systems, whose fate they were content to rest on the fortunes of the conflict in which they had engaged as in an ordinary duel. Even in king Eadwig's struggle with archbishop Dunstan, the combatants seem scarcely to have realised the full significance of the conflict on which they had entered, and which had therefore rather the semblance of a mere spectacle in which the crowd might find food for its restless passions.

England, far removed from the focus of ecclesiastical strife, had been necessarily wanting in a due control over its priesthood, as well as in subjection to the influence of institutions founded in the bosom of the church. The disorders among the ecclesiastics, which have been already mentioned, were revived in the northern parts by the wars, and, perhaps, even in a greater degree by peace with the Northmen. Of the conduct of the archbishop of York and his clergy we have just seen an example, and feel disposed to prefer the pure worshipper of Odin to the hypocritical associate of the pagan. The marriage of priests appeared at that time

dangerous not only to the church but to the state, as the married prelates, through their attachment to wife and children, might be induced to palliate even apostasy from the faith for the preservation of worldly possessions. In the south of Europe the rule of the monks of Monte Cassino gradually opposed a dam to this greatest inducement to apostasy; and veneration for Benedict of Nursia, and his precepts relative to the celibacy of the clergy and other monastic vows, as to poverty and obedience, had slowly penetrated to the northern provinces of France. Yet the earlier attempts of Wilfrith to establish the clergy on the monastic system, as well as many ordinances aiming at that object promulgated in English councils and by pious kings, had been partly fruitless and partly forgotten.

In the first year of the reign of Æthelstan, Heorstan and Cynethrith, both of a noble West-Saxon race, had a son born to them, named Dunstan.¹ For his higher

¹ Besides the accounts of Dunstan to be found in the old chroniclers, we possess several biographies of him, viz.—

- a. 'Adalardi, Monachi Blandiniensis, Eulogium Dunstani,' composed about twenty years after his death, and dedicated to archbishop Ælfheah. It contains little else than miraculous stories and matter to be found in works already printed, and consequently remains in MS. A MS. belonging to the abbey of Bec is mentioned by Papebrock in *Actis Sancti. Maii* 19, t. iv. p. 344. See Wright, *Biogr. Brit.* vol. i. p. 494.
- b. 'Bridferthi Vita S. Dunstani' was likewise written shortly after his death, and was dedicated to archbishop Ælfric. This biography abounds in information. It is printed in the *Acta Sancti.* from a MS. belonging to the monastery of S. Vedast at Arras. Turner usually cites it MS. Cotton. Cleopatra B. xiii. See Wright, vol. i. pp. 477, 478.
- c. 'Vita S. Dunstani, Auctore Osberto,' printed in Surius, 'De Probatis Sanctorum Vitis.' It is assigned to the year 1020. It agrees verbally with Eadmar's work; the name of Osbert may, therefore, originate in error.

instruction the talented boy was sent to the monastic school at Glastonbury, where many Scots gained their livelihood by educating the sons of the principal Saxon families. A weakly constitution, which is often favourable to the development of great talents, by facilitating secession from the stupefying turmoil and dissipation of the outer world, and, perhaps, by exciting the nervous system to a higher degree of susceptibility, seems to have wrought as beneficially on Dunstan as it had done on king Ælfred. By influential relatives, among whom may probably be reckoned Wulfhelm, archbishop of Canterbury, Dunstan at an early age was brought to the court of Æthelstan,¹ which he was shortly after compelled to leave, through the persecutions of the envious courtiers—stimulated, perhaps, by the arrogance of Dunstan himself—who succeeded, in consequence of his fondness for the old ballads and early history of his country, in rendering him suspected of

d. 'Osberni Vita S. Dunstani,' lib. ii., composed about the year 1070 by a friend of archbishop Lanfranc. It agrees closely with the preceding, but contains besides much valuable information. It is printed in the *Acta Sancti*, and in extract in Wharton, *A. S. t. ii. p. 88*. Osbern laments the destruction of many writings by the fire at Canterbury in 1070.

e. 'Vita S. Dunstani, Auctore Eadmero.' The author was a scholar of archbishop Anselm. An extract is printed in Wharton, *t. ii. p. 211*.

f. The most recent available printed authorities for the life of Dunstan are to be found in 'Memorials of S. Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury,' edited from various MSS. by W. Stubbs, M.A., 1874; and in 'Willelmi Malmesberiensis Monachi de Gestis Pontificum Anglorum,' edited from W. Malm. Autograph MS. by N. E. S. A. Hamilton, 1870.—E. C. O.

¹ Osbern says, "Patruus suus Æthelmus," though this predecessor of Wulfhelm appears to have died before 928.

heathenism and magic,¹ and, moreover, misused him on his return home and cast him into a bog. By the counsel of his relative the bishop of Winchester, and owing to an illness, he was induced to devote himself to a monastic life. In the society of Æthelflæd, a rich matron of royal descent, he passed a considerable time, during which he cultivated the arts of music and painting, and distinguished himself in the execution of metallic works, such as crucifixes, bells and censers.² Numerous miracles are related of him, of which the following may serve as a specimen:—On a visit paid by the king and his court to Æthelflæd and Dunstan, the royal cup-bearers always found the vessel filled anew with mead, as often as they imagined that they had emptied it. King Eadmund set him over the abbey of Glastonbury, where, first of all the English abbots, he introduced the Benedictine rule, which, at the same time, had been adopted by Oda, archbishop of Canterbury, during his visit to the French abbey of Fleury,³ which had sprung out of the Burgundian cloister of Cluny founded about thirty years before. Their example was followed by Æthelwold, afterwards bishop of Winchester, and by Oswald the nephew of Oda, who subsequently became archbishop of York, and by other ecclesiastics of eminence, so that the Benedictine rule gradually was introduced into all the monasteries of England. Dunstan wholly devoted himself to the duties of the strictest monastic life, and we yet possess

¹ Bridferth, c. i. "*Ex libris salutaribus et viris peritis non salutis animarum profutura, sed avitæ gentilitatis vanissima didicisse carmina, et historiarum frivolas colere incantationum nænias.*"

² See Bridferth, Osbern, etc. Warton, H. E. P. vol. i. pp. ci, cii, edit. 1840. In Hickes (t. i.) there is an engraving from one of Dunstan's drawings, representing the Saviour.

³ Malmesb. de Pont. lib. i.

his commentary on the newly introduced rule. The small bishopric of Crediton, offered to him by king Eadred and his mother, he declined, and, looking forward to a more influential station, was content to procure that see for Ælfwold.¹ The king, according to a practice far from unusual at a time when sacrilege was of much rarer occurrence than the capture of the strongest fortresses, intrusted the royal treasure, and the titles of many landed possessions to the protection of the hallowed walls of Glastonbury; while Dunstan, as he had formerly disposed of the wealth of Æthelflæd, so now, with the sanction of Eadred, employed the greater riches of that prince in the foundation of religious structures.

→ Dunstan would probably have closed his life in exertions for the spread of monastic discipline, had not an event at the coronation of Eadwig drawn him into the vortex of political strife. The king had espoused Ælfgifu, the daughter of Æthelgifu,² a lady of noble, if not royal descent, as their marriage was not deemed valid on account of too close consanguinity.

¹ Osbern and others, however, relate that the see of Winchester, vacant by the death of Ælfheah (ob. 951), was offered to Dunstan. I follow the older and original authorities, Bridferth and Florence (a. 953), as well as my own idea of Dunstan's character.

² All the biographers of Dunstan maintain that Ælfgifu was not the wife of Eadwig, and overload her and her mother with the most degrading epithets; though Bridferth says of the latter "natione præcelsa." We follow Malmesbury, ii. 7; Hist. Rames. c. 7; Wallingford, p. 543; but particularly a charter in the History of Abingdon [MS. Cott. Claud. B. vi. fol. 51 a.] and an abstract of it in the same collection (Claud. c. ix. p. 112). To the first of these documents the signatures are, "ælfifu ðæs cyninges wif and æthelgifu þæs cyninges wifes modur—ælfsige biscop—osulf biscop—byrhtnoð ealdorman—ælfheah cyninges disc ðen—eadric his broður."—To the second document, "ælfifa regis uxor, et æthelgefa mater ejus ælfsiæge episc.—osulf. episc.—Kenwald episc. et multi alii."—T.]

Eadwig was so captivated by the beauty of his young wife, that immediately after the solemn ceremony of his coronation, he left the company of his nobles and prelates for the sake of enjoying her society among the females of his family. By the company assembled at the banquet this proceeding on the part of the king was justly regarded as an insult, and more particularly by those of the clerical order, who did not acknowledge Ælfifu as their sovereign's wife, regarding her, according to their law, as a concubine. At the suggestion of archbishop Oda, Cynesige, bishop of Lichfield, and the abbot Dunstan were sent to the king, whom they found without his crown, caressing his young wife, and unwilling to return to the hall of drinkers, from which he had just escaped; whereupon the vehement young abbot, seizing him by the hand, replaced the crown on his anointed head, and, despising the threats of the women, whom he insulted in the most opprobrious terms, drew him back to the banquet.

This proceeding of Dunstan soon showed itself as alike inconsiderate and injurious. Under the last king, the prelates and other ecclesiastics, who found themselves restrained in their privileges and enjoyments by the new discipline, had gathered around Eadwig, and gained his good-will; and the grossly insulted queen was naturally now willing to become the organ of the great body of the old clergy of the country. The resolution was, therefore, formed to expel from the kingdom Dunstan and the new Benedictines his associates, and an opportunity for carrying this resolve into effect soon presented itself. The king demanded the restoration of the royal treasure deposited by his predecessor in the abbey of Glastonbury, a demand which Dunstan deemed it advisable to elude by flight.

Scarcely had he left the shores of Britain when the agents of Æthelgifu arrived with an order, it is said, to put out his eyes. He, however, reached the coast of Flanders in safety, where he was kindly received by count Arnulf, and found a refuge in the abbey of Blandin, or St. Peter, at Ghent.¹

But the most dangerous enemies of Eadwig continued around him. Misled by profligate counsellors, he seized the possessions of his grandmother Eadgifu, a matron revered throughout the land, and particularly in the monastic establishments. The newly founded Benedictine cloisters he placed under sequestration, regardless of the consideration that the rule of those monks was favourable to the maintenance of his kingdom, and that a party formed on the renunciation of earthly goods would soon prove victorious over rigid law and rapacity. By such acts of violence and covetousness, particularly towards old and experienced individuals, and by his indulgent weakness towards insolent minions, he but too soon embittered and estranged a large portion of his subjects. Mercia and the eastern provinces, and, shortly after, Northumbria cast off their allegiance, and chose as their king, after an unhappy interval of anarchy, his younger brother, the ætheling Eadgar, at that time only fourteen years of age, who had already governed in Mercia under the supremacy of Eadwig.²

The Thames formed the boundary between those states which still continued united with Wessex, and the new kingdom which extended to the Castle of the Maidens (*Castrum Puellarum*), the modern city of

¹ MS. Cott. Cleop. B. xiii. 76, 77. Osbern. Eadmer.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 957. In a charter of Eadwig, a. 957, Eadgar is still styled "regis frater." See Cod. Diplom. ii. p. 343.

Edinburgh.¹ That this revolution was effected with the co-operation of the persecuted Benedictines is in the highest degree probable, and is rendered still more so by their early recall to Mercia. Dunstan quitted the abbey of Blandin at Ghent,² and by a witenagemot assembled at Bradford was destined for a bishopric, that he might be ever at hand to aid the king by his counsel. He received from Eadgar the vacant sees of London and Worcester, on which occasion the violation of the Canons, which forbid the possession of two bishoprics by the same individual, was justified with admirable effrontery by no less examples than that of John the beloved disciple of our Lord, and of St. Paul, the former of whom presided over seven, and the latter over all churches at the same time.³

For the deeply humiliated Eadwig, mortifications yet more poignant were in store. The clergy, who still remained faithful to him, with archbishop Oda at their head, insisted upon his separation from Ælfgifu.⁴ He was forced to yield, and she was then dragged from the palace by the armed satellites of the prelate, who barbarously and ignominiously disfigured her fair countenance with hot iron: after which cruel infliction she was banished to Ireland. When her wounds were healed and her beauty restored she returned to England, and at Gloucester fell into the hands of her inexorable persecutors, who caused her to be cruelly mutilated by severing the sinews of her legs. In a few days death

¹ Wallingford, p. 542.

² His gratitude to this abbey appears from a confirmation by king Eadgar, in 964, of the donation mentioned at p. 98, *note* ¹.

³ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 957. Sim. Dunelm. a. 958.

⁴ Osbern. de Vita Odonis, ap. Wharton, lib. i. 84. Malmesb. de Pont. lib. i.

put an end to her sufferings. Eadwig himself died shortly after at the same place, but whether by the sword of his enemies or otherwise is uncertain.¹ With more certainty we may in general judge concerning him, that by the monkish writers his memory has been unjustly and indecently calumniated, and that the crowned and anointed stripling fell as one of those sacrifices more pitiable than culpable, which the introduction of great revolutions in state and church has but too often demanded. But, if posterity wish to pronounce a righteous judgment on characters of this kind, it ought never to forget that the writers, to whom we are beholden for our knowledge of a given period, usually belong to a party, whose cause, it must be granted, they often take up generously and rightly, although they too often omit to acknowledge an equally magnanimous, though opposite, spirit in their antagonists.

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 958, Oct. 1. Fl. W. a. 959. Bridferth, lib. i. "Novissimum flatum misera morte expiravit." Osbern. p. 84. "Edwyo misera morte damnato." Hist. Rames. c. 14. "**fatali** sorte sublato." Turner (from a Cott. MS.), "Rex Westsaxonum Edwinus in pago Gloucestrensi interfectus fuit."

CHAPTER IX.

A.D. 959-978.

Eadgar, 959-975—His Education, Character, and Surroundings—
 Dunstan—Monastic Institutions—Eadgar's Wives and Children
 —His Profligacy—Plague—Pestilence—Wars—King's Measures
 for the Defence of his Kingdom—His Coronation—Solemnity on
 the Dee—His Courage, Severity, and Laws—Eadward II., 975-
 978—Dunstan's Power in the State—Contentions of the Clergy
 —Character of Dunstan—Eadward's Murder by Order of his
 Stepmother.

EADWIG, the most unhappy of princes, was succeeded by his brother Eadgar, the most fortunate of his race, for on no Anglo-Saxon sovereign can that epithet be more justly bestowed than on him who reaped all the fruits of the labours of his predecessors, and was especially favoured by the tranquillity existing in the Northern kingdoms after the outpouring of their innumerable hordes, and their settlements in the provinces which had been ceded to them by almost every considerable state of Europe. At the same time, the character of Eadgar was distinguished by extraordinary deference not only towards his experienced counsellors, but also for the peculiarities of the several peoples over which he ruled, in which characteristic many of the advantages as well as reproaches of his reign may probably find their explanation. In the formation of this characteristic, his early education may have decidedly co-operated, as while a child, we know not on what grounds,—his mother

having probably lived till he had attained the age of manhood,—he was committed for education to the care of Ælfwyn, the widow of Æthelstan, half-king of East Anglia,¹ of whom we have already made mention, and was, consequently, from an early period familiar with the Danes and their customs. Connections originating in this circumstance may even have been influential in his election to the throne of Mercia.

But the soul of Eadgar's reign was Dunstan, who employed the influence acquired by his imperious spirit, as far as we are now enabled to judge, for the benefit of the state; while, at the same time, he served himself and the church. The archbishop Oda (who, notwithstanding the manifest barbarity of his conduct towards the consort of his sovereign, was designated 'the Good'), had died in the foregoing year, and his successor Ælfsige, previously bishop of Winchester, having perished among the glaciers of Switzerland, on his way to Rome to receive his pall, Byrthelm, bishop of Sherborne, had already under Eadwig been chosen to fill the archiepiscopal throne of Canterbury, when Eadgar, either considering him unfitted for the station,² or, what is more probable, being desirous of raising his favourite Dunstan to the vacant dignity, sent Byrthelm back to his diocese. Need we now add that Dunstan received the archiepiscopal see and primacy of all England, and that pope John the Twelfth willingly confirmed the

¹ Hist. Rames. c. 3. Æthelwine, the son of Ælfwyn, is on his gravestone called "cognatus Edgari." Gough's Sepulchral Monuments, vol. i. p. xcii, cited by Palgrave, ii. p. ccci, note ²⁰.

² Bridferth, p. 254. "Vir mitis et modestus et humilis et benignus in tantum, ut tumidos quosque vel rebelles sub correctionis verbere non ut debuisset cohiberet." Osbern. Vita Dunst. "Homo mansuetior quam industrius, et qui suæ magis quam alienæ vitæ posset consuli." Ejusd. Vita Odonis, "Nimie pietatis et simplicitatis."

choice, by conferring the pall on his able champion? Dunstan's most earnest endeavour was now to get all the bishoprics into the hands of the Benedictines. Of the sees which he had held, Worcester was bestowed on Oswald, a nephew of Oda, London on Ælfstan, while Æthelwold, a disciple of Dunstan, and abbot of Abingdon,—which immediately after Glastonbury had admitted the Benedictine rule,—received the rich see of Winchester, which some years later fell vacant. The inauguration of the new bishops was followed by the expulsion, often violent, of the old clergy, who were unwilling to renounce the world according to the monastic notion, or to promote the introduction of the Benedictines, who soon became the predominant order in the kingdom. Above forty Benedictine convents are said to have been founded by Eadgar.¹ Oswald (who was afterwards raised to the see of York, in consequence of whose strictness in displacing the married clergy, the laws to that effect were distinguished by the name of "Oswald's law")² and Æthelwold, with their preceptor Dunstan, were the chief counsellors of the king. These men it must, however, be conceded zealously devoted themselves to the instruction of the clergy. They also drew into England many monks from France, amongst whom was Abbo of Fleury, known to us through his life of the martyred Ædmund, and as the restorer of the long-decayed school at Ramsey.

Of the first five years of Eadgar's reign we have no accounts beyond what chiefly relate to his passive

¹ Fl. W. a. 959.

² We possess a biography of Oswald by Eadmer, printed in Wharton, t. ii. p. 191. See document a. 964 in Wilkins, Concil. t. i. p. 239, and Cod. Diplom. t. ii. p. 404.

co-operation in the monastic regulations. The irregularities of the young unrestrained prince seem in great measure to have filled up the chronicle of those years, without having drawn on him perils similar to those which overwhelmed his less fortunate brother. Of his first wife, Æthelflæd the Fair, named also Ened (the Duck), a daughter of the ealdorman Ordmær, was born Eadward, who succeeded him on the throne. By Wulfthryth, a novice whom he had carried off from the abbey of Wilton, he had a daughter named Eadgyth, who devoted herself to a life of sanctity, and died abbess of Wilton.¹ After a lapse of centuries, ballad-singers delighted the bystanders with the story how, once upon a time, king Eadgar being at Andover had ordered the daughter of a nobleman celebrated for her beauty to be brought to his bed, and how the shocked and offended mother substituted in the darkness of the night a female slave instead of her beloved child, and that, on discovery of the deception, the king gave the miserable tool of his lust her freedom, and set her as mistress over her former lady. Many other tales are told of the cruelty and dissoluteness of Dunstan's royal pupil, which, however they may have been propagated by the naturally ill-disposed secular clergy, and embellished at a later period by the Normans in degradation of the Anglo-Saxon rulers, nevertheless reflect the general impression made by his early years. His last marriage was with Ælfthryth,² the daughter of Ordgar, ealdorman of Devonshire, and

¹ Florence, a. 964, makes mention of Wulfrith, also Osbern, c. viii., though without naming her. See also Malmesbury and Bromton.

² Her name appears as queen to a charter of 964. Concil. i. p. 239. Cod. Diplom. ii. p. 406. So Florence. In the Sax. Chron. the marriage is erroneously recorded under 965.

founder of Tavistock abbey, by whom he was the father of two princes, Eadmund, who died young, and Æthelred, who afterwards became king. The details of this connection are probably not to be regarded as altogether false, and are, as it were, a pearl in the romantic treasury of the Anglo-Saxons, which, however, bears witness to the depravity of the royal race so soon to be extinguished. According to tradition, Eadgar, having heard the praises of the beautiful daughter of the ealdorman of Devonshire, sent his early friend Æthelwold, son of the half-king Æthelstan, to ascertain the truth of the reports, and even to act for him in the character of a wooer. The heart of the young representative being captivated by the fair Ælfthryth, he sues on his own account for her hand, and conducts the fairest flower of England to his home. The rash transgressor describes her to his sovereign as a very ordinary person, and wholly unworthy of the royal honour. But how can such beauty remain concealed? The king announces his intention to visit Æthelwold, who thereupon discloses to his wife the fraud which he had perpetrated, and implores her to attire herself in the most unbecoming manner. Enraged on finding herself thus deprived of a crown, Ælfthryth spares no pains to fascinate the king, who, blinded by rage and love, condescends to avenge himself on Æthelwold with his own hand, by piercing him through the back in the forest of Werewell or Harewood, when the widow becomes the wife of the murderer.¹

In striking contrast to the dissolute life of the court stood the manifold ills with which England was at that time afflicted. Pestilence, conflagrations (one of which devastated London and laid the cathedral of

¹ W. Malm. ii. 8. More circumstantially G. Gaimar v. 3601 sq. Brompton.

St. Paul in ashes), are from this period more frequently mentioned, and are perhaps worthy of record as signs of an increasing population.¹

Some acts must, however, have been performed which gained for the young king the love of his people and the respect of his enemies. For the perfect security of the country against the Norman or Danish settlers, it was necessary to bring under subjection their countrymen dwelling in the neighbouring isles, particularly those at Dublin and other strong places on the coasts of Ireland. In furtherance of this object, Eadgar continued the exertions of his predecessors to found the defence and power of his people in a numerous fleet. The number of his ships stationed on the west, north and eastern coasts is said to have been a "great thousand" on each, an expression which, if literally understood, would indicate a fleet of three thousand six hundred vessels. This is unquestionably an exaggerated account, though at the same time it should be borne in mind that such vessels were extremely small, and adapted only to coasting voyages or fishing. The naval review (*scip-fyrd*, *scip-fyrðung*) was held yearly by the king about Easter, when, passing from one fleet to another, he made the circuit of the whole islands. These well-appointed armaments gained for the government of Eadgar the greatest consideration, and held all warfare so far from the shores of England, that he acquired the surname of 'the Peaceful'; though wars conducted with reputation, and inroads into the neighbouring states were not wanting during his reign. In one of the first naval expeditions undertaken by Eadgar, he reduced the Danes in Ireland to subjection, and took Dublin,

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 962. Suppl. to Eadgar's Laws, I., in Anc. LL. and Inst.

the first acquisition of the Anglo-Saxons beyond their own territory. King Sigeferth, who, it is mentioned, killed himself at Wimborne, was probably a Danish prisoner of war.¹

A successful expedition was undertaken into North Wales, which was cruelly ravaged by the army of Eadgar.² The cause of the war was the refusal of Idwal, a son of Rotri Mawr, to pay the tribute which had been regularly rendered to Wessex from the time of Æthelstan. Idwal fell in this war.³ So oppressive an exaction was probably found impracticable, since it appears that Eadgar was afterwards satisfied with a yearly delivery of three hundred heads of wolves, a tribute testifying, perhaps, to the interest taken by him in the rearing of cattle, which may also be inferred from his enactment relative to the price of wool, England's greatest source of wealth.⁴ This exaction proved so beneficial, that in the fourth year the number of heads could no longer be collected.⁵

An expedition into Westmoreland under Thored, the son of Gunner,⁶ was most probably undertaken by order of Eadgar, the name of Thored appearing at an earlier period as master of the royal household, and later among those of the royal commanders.⁷

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 962. See also charter of 964 (undoubtedly spurious), Conc. i. p. 239, and Cod. Diplom. ii. p. 404.

² Annal. Camb. a. 968. Brut y Tyw. a. 965.

³ Annal. Camb. a. 963.

⁴ Laws of Eadgar, II. 8. in Anc. LL. and Inst.

⁵ W. Malm. ii. 8. Caradoc, p. 56.

⁶ Gunner's name appears among those of the high officials in charters of 949, 956, etc. See Cod. Diplom. ii. pp. 296, 326; Monast. iii. p. 37; Heming, 334.

⁷ Charter of Eadgar of Dec. 26, a. 961, to the abbey of St. Denis, "domus nostræ præpositus, Togred:" wherein it also appears that

The settlement of the Northern portion of his dominions forms a conspicuous feature in the government of Eadgar. He divided Northumbria anew into two parts, and girded with the sword of authority over Deira, as an earldom, the earl Oslac, whose residence was at York: while Osulf and his sons were limited to the country north of the Tees,¹ and afterwards to the present county of Northumberland. A part of the old earldom, consisting of the coast-land of Deira from the Tees, was granted by the king to Eadwulf, surnamed 'Evilchild' (Yfelcild). But the most important of all these enfeoffments was that by which the province of Lothian was granted by Eadgar and his witan to Kenneth, king of Scotland,² a grant which can hardly be ascribed to any other cause than the weakness of the superior lord in that part of the realm, and which led to the permanent incorporation of the Scoto-Saxon lowlands with the strictly Scoto-Gaelic kingdom. Edinburgh had already been evacuated by the English and fallen into the hands of the Scottish king Indulf, and it is possible that the possession of the rest of Bernicia might have been thereby made more secure to its English rulers. The indulgence shown by Eadgar to the Danes and other foreigners in the country was universally blamed.³ The offspring of strangers gained through

Eadgar then spent Christmas at York. See Felibien, *Hist. de l'Abbaye de St. Denys*, Bouquet, ix. p. 397, and Sax. Chron. aa. 966, 992.

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 966. Sim. Dunelm. Wallingford.

² A.D. 953-971. Chron. Pict. Wallingford, p. 545. Matt. Westmon. R. Wendover, t. i. p. 416.

³ W. Malm. ii. 8. H. Hunt. "In hoc tamen peccavit, quod paganos eos, qui in hac patria sub eo degebant, nimis firmavit, et extraneos huc adductos plus æquo diligens valde corroboravit."

his favour such extensive influence and power, that the simple, rough national character was greatly corrupted by them; and the people are said to have learned fierceness from the German Saxons, effeminacy from the Flemings, and drunkenness from the Danes. It can hardly, however, be doubted that to these vices the English had long been no strangers, and that Eadgar's hospitable court may only have increased them. The rising opulence of England and its commerce with the Southern states could not be otherwise than attended with prejudicial consequences. Juster appears the reproach, that Eadgar was too indulgent to the Danish inhabitants, and that, instead of subjecting them to the laws of his kingdom, he not only acknowledged the validity of their old legal usages, but also allowed too great an extent to their autonomy.¹

Eadgar's relations with the other states of Europe are wrapped in obscurity. Of matrimonial alliances with foreign sovereigns no trace appears. The interests of the pope were not neglected by the Benedictines. His uncle, the emperor Otto the First, sent him costly presents, and confirmed the alliance already existing between them.²

It is a remarkable event in the life of Eadgar that in the sixteenth year of his reign and thirtieth of his age he caused himself to be anointed at Bath (Acemannes ceaster), on the day of Pentecost,³ by the archbishops Dunstan and Oswald. Why this ceremony had not taken

¹ Suppl. to Eadgar's Laws, 2, 12, 13, in Anc. LL. and Inst.

² Fl. W. a. 959. "Imperator etiam primus Otto, qui suam (Eadgari) amitam in conjugem habebat, mira illi munera direxit, et cum eo pactum firmissimæ pacis firmavit." Florence, however does not say expressly that this took place in the year 959, but only at the conclusion of his character of Eadgar given under that year.

³ Sax. Chron. a. 973.

place earlier, or, if it had already been performed, for what purpose it was at this time repeated, is matter of uncertainty, though it has been brought into connection with a tradition, according to which Eadgar, as a part of the penance imposed on him by Dunstan for the abduction of Wulfthryth, was forbidden to wear the crown till the expiration of seven years.¹ This story has been generally, and, perhaps, justly regarded as groundless; though it cannot be denied that a desire on the part of Eadgar to receive back his crown from the hand of him who had forbidden him to wear it, would be in perfect keeping with the spirit both of that and of a much later age. A glorious day followed this solemnity. On making his annual sea-voyage round the island, he found, on his arrival at Chester, eight sub-kings awaiting him, in obedience to the commands they had received, who swore "to be faithful to him, and to be his fellow-workers by sea and land." These were Kenneth of Scotland, Malcolm of Cumbria, Maccus of Man and the Hebrides, Dyfnwall, or Dunwallon, of Strath-clyde, Siferth, Iago (Jacob) and Howell of Wales, and Juchill of Westmoreland.² All these vassals rowed the proud Basileus on the river Dee in a barge, of which Eadgar was the steersman, to the monastery of St. John the Baptist, where they offered up their orisons, and then returned in the same order to the palace. Eadgar concealed not his exultation, but exclaimed to the nobles present, that his

¹ Osbern. lib. i.

² Fl. W. a. 973. Matt. Westm. a. 974. In a charter of 971, ap. Malmesb. de Antiq. Glaston. "Maccus archipirata." "Dufnal. rex Demetiæ" in M. West. appears erroneous. See Brut y Tyw a. 974, and Annal. Ulton. [The charter of 971 is undoubtedly a forgery, as well as another of Eadgar, a. 966 (Cod. Diplom. ii. p. 412), where it stands, "Maccus rex insularum."—T.]

successors might now truly glory in the title of king of England, when they could command the obedience of so many kings.

Two years after this splendid solemnity, Eadgar died, or, in the language of the Saxon poet, ended his "earthly joys; chose him another light, beauteous and winsome, and left this frail and barren life."¹ This renowned prince was, it is said, low and slight of stature, though in the unceasing consciousness of this defect, at a time when brute strength decided every difference, he distinguished himself by active and gratuitous courage. In illustration of this trait in his character, the following tale has been repeatedly told. In a convivial party, Kenneth, king of Scotland, observed, that it was extraordinary to see so many provinces under subjection to such a contemptible personage. This speech was reported to the king, who sent for Kenneth, and having drawn him into a wood, under the pretext of consulting with him on some important affairs, presented to him one of two swords which he had brought, saying, "Now that we are alone you can try your strength; for it is disgraceful to be a braggart in company and backward in battle." Kenneth, struck with confusion, begged forgiveness for the joke, which was readily granted.²

Among the virtues of Eadgar is the zeal with which he journeyed through his states in winter and summer, examining into the administration of his ealdormen and punishing their delinquencies. An instance of his severity is recorded towards the inhabitants of the Isle

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 975.

² Fl. W. a. 975. W. Malm. ii. 8. Ailred of Rievaulx (*Vita Eadwardi regis*, p. 367) tells a similar story of Malcolm, king of Scotland.

of Thanet, whom he punished with the forfeiture of all their property, and some with the loss of life, for having made prisoners and plundered of their merchandise some traders from York who had arrived at the Isle.¹ His ecclesiastical enactments enjoin the payment of dues to the church with a rigour scarcely credible. Whoever had not paid his tithes, or his church-scot on the day appointed, forfeited nine-tenths of the tithable property: and the man who had not paid his hearth-money (Rom-feoh) on St. Peter's day, was adjudged to go to Rome and there pay it with mulct, and another mulct to the king on his return: for the third offence he forfeited all his property.² He who refused to pay his tithe was deprived of all his tithable property, two-tenths going to the parish church, four-tenths to the bishop, and the rest to the king or the feudal lord of the recusant thane. The ecclesiastical laws enacted under Eadgar are chiefly derived either from the older penitential of Archbishop Theodore, or, rather, from that of his copier Ecgbert of York, and are marked by the excessive severity of their penal enactments.

In Eadgar's secular laws the duties of the judge are strongly insisted on; and the holding of a burh-mote is ordained twice, of a shire-mote thrice in the year. The principles of the system of mutual responsibility are in these laws more accurately defined, and regulations made for the confirmation of sales and purchases by legal sworn witnesses, thirty-three of such officials being appointed for every large burgh, and twelve for every smaller burgh or hundred. Eadgar's care for a

¹ Sax. Chron. H. Hunt. [who says that the cause of Eadgar's severity was, "*quia jura regalia spreverant.*" See R. Wendover i. p. 414.—T.]

² Laws of Eadgar, I. 3, 4.

uniform monetary standard, and for the general observance of the Winchester weights and measures,¹ together with other enactments, prove how greatly commerce must have increased and been esteemed in the country during his reign.

EADWARD THE SECOND—CALLED THE MARTYR.

Eadgar left two very young sons, Eadward, aged thirteen years, and Æthelred, only seven. Although the queen Ælfthryth had striven to procure the crown for her offspring, yet Eadgar as well as his council had decided in favour of his eldest unquestionably legitimate son. Some of the most powerful of the nobles insisted on the right of election, and declared in favour of Æthelred, on the very unsatisfactory ground that, at the time of Eadward's birth, neither his father nor mother had been crowned,² a reason which, if valid, was equally applicable to the younger prince. The primate, however, put an end to the difference by seizing the banner of the cross, confuting in the middle of the assembly the arguments of the opposite party, and presenting to them the young prince Eadward, whom he consecrated on the spot.

This violent contest had not the remotest connection with the interests of the royal youth; and it soon became evident that the factions which divided the country were in reality the friends and foes of the Benedictines, whose expulsion was vainly attempted. Ælfhere, the powerful ealdorman of Mercia, expelled the monks from the monasteries in his territory, which he again threw open to the secular clergy. The monks, on the other hand, were powerfully supported by

¹ Laws of Eadgar, II. 8.

² Eadmer, lib. i. p. 220.

Æthelwine, the ealdorman of East Anglia,¹ and his brother Ælfwold, as well as by Byrhtnorth,² the brave and pious ealdorman of the East Saxons. It is, however, far from clear in what manner these transactions are connected with the banishment of the powerful earl Oslac, who, on account of his wisdom, eloquence and excellent administration during ten years of the province of Deira, was so highly extolled. The friends of the monks bewailed his banishment "over the rolling waves, over the gannet's bath, over the mass of waters the whale's domain."³ But who, if not Dunstan, had at that time the power to banish him? And if he possessed the power to exile and proscribe such men, would he not rather have exiled and proscribed Ælfhere?

The party of the secular clergy strove to the very utmost to profit by the advantage they had gained. It bears witness to the connection of the Anglo-Saxon church at that time with the Scottish, and to its constant opposition to the church of Rome, that the expelled clergy had fled to Scotland, and now brought back with them from that country the excellent bishop Beornhelm, a man unequalled among his contemporaries for understanding and eloquence, for the purpose of aiding them by his talents against Dunstan in the synods which then were so frequently held.⁴ In a council at Calne, the archbishop, on the close of an able and eloquent address by Beornhelm, arose and spoke, ending his speech with the words, that he, an aged man, already devoted to silence, had renounced all

¹ Fl. W. a. 975. Hist. Rames. c. xxxix.

² Hist. Eliens. lib. ii. c. 6, ap. Gale. Hist. Rames. c. lxxi.

³ Fl. W. a. 976: "injuste expellitur." See the verses in Sax. Chron. a. 975. His name is appended to several charters, and is mentioned in the laws of Eadgar, Suppl. xv.

⁴ Osbern. lib. i.

thoughts of contending with his opponents; but that Christ would overcome them; when suddenly the floor of the room gave way, and many of those present were hurt, and some killed. The king, on account of his youth, was not present. The primate and his friends were standing on a spot unaffected by the accident; so that the salvation of the one party seems in reality to have had in it as little of the miraculous as the injury sustained by the other. It should, moreover, be borne in mind that instances of falling buildings filled with people are numerous at all times, but particularly during the middle ages,¹ and that the slain and maimed on this occasion were not the hostile clergy, but some of the most venerable persons in the realm.² There are, nevertheless, few writers since the Reformation who can prevail on themselves to acquit the suspected prelate of the most improbable accusation, of having played, with the certainty of exposure, the dangerous and useless part of a most heartless juggler.

Let us here devote a few words in explanation of our idea of Dunstan. His Christianity was not the religion of love, of blissful delight in the creation of a spirituality bound by tender links to the joys of earth; as little was it the serious doctrine of rights possessed by all men, mutually to be acknowledged, and to be harmonized by love, or by equality in earthly relations. Even the purest and brightest conception, as soon as it is realised, becomes of necessity restricted, confused, and

¹ Once at Erfurt, under the emperor Frederick I., the apartment in which a court was held fell down, when eight princes and above a hundred knights were killed. See Albert of Stade, a. 1183.

² Sax. Chron. a. 978. "ealle þa yldestan Angel-cynnes witan." Fl. W. "totius Angliæ majores natu."

obscured by constant contrarieties ; and it was the licentiousness, ruggedness and sensuality of the barbarians, which, as the chief evils to be subdued and purified by the doctrine of Christ, required and created the unity of the papal authority, with the school-divinity of the clergy, and the severity of the monastic rule. By means of these Dunstan dared to accomplish the utmost that could be effected in his time ; and even though all the events of his life should bear witness against him, the influence which the new clergy, established through his influence, maintained in the country for many centuries, and even in times when only the bell of the mass-boy called to mind the name of the forgotten saint, proves that he who, in a time of universal dissolution, was able so powerfully to awaken and to bind the more seriously disposed, understood and effected the best that a knowledge of his time and circumstances placed within his power. We shall soon come to speak of Dunstan's excellent disciples and of their successors, who—not to mention what they have done for the church, the civilization and the language of the Anglo-Saxons—were able to turn into a blessing, the storm that beat on England from the North ; and who finally, when the Normans had conquered the country, manifested so great an attachment to the land of their fathers, that their universal extirpation was necessary before the Conqueror could feel security within the strong Tower of London.

Dunstan, it is true, with his partisans mistook form for reality, as all reformers and founders of sects to this present day have done, with the exception of One, who taught no form to His disciples, because He knew that in every age, with or without the recognition of its founder, a form, a figure and—why shall we not say

it?—a mask, necessary perhaps for the time, would be given to His eternal doctrine. But the spirit lives on in spite of self-destructive falsehood, and of the changes which supplant one another. Thus the genius and works of Dunstan have outlived the Anglo-Saxon language and dynasty, and even Catholicism itself in England, nor can their influence at the present day be denied by the Anglican Church, nor by Dissenters, who, like Dunstan, are earnestly striving for what to them appears the truest and the best.

Eadward had scarcely approached the age of manhood, and begun to excite the hope of continuing his line by an early marriage, when the apprehensions of his step-mother, whom he had vainly endeavoured to conciliate by a grant of the county of Dorset,¹ were awakened anew. On his return one day from the chase, thirsty and fatigued, and knowing that Ælfthryth and her son were residing close by at Corfe, he directed his course thither alone, his attendants having followed after the hounds in various directions. He was received with the warmest tokens of affection by his step-mother, but while she was in the act of presenting him with a cup of beverage, an assassin, by her command, plunged a dagger into his body.² Feeling himself wounded, the young king put spurs to his horse, but weakened by loss of blood, and his entrails protruding, he fell from the saddle, and was dragged in the stirrup till he expired. The royal corpse was buried without pomp or ceremony at Wareham, but in the following year it was disinterred by the order of the ealdorman Ælfhere, and buried with royal honours

¹ Wallingford, p. 545.

² A.D. 978, March 18. *Passio S. Eadwardi*. W. Malm. ii. 9. Gaimar, v. 3989 sq., who differs from both.

at Shaftesbury.¹ Both Ælfhere, who was a cousin of Eadgar,² and the young Æthelred have been accused as accessaries in the murder :³ the former probably by the Benedictines, whose enemies he favoured ; the latter by later tradition only,⁴ which readily listened to any charge against the unbeloved Æthelred.

¹ Fl. W. aa. 978, 979. W. Malm. ii. 9. Gaimar. That confounder of history, Wallingford, who calls the step-mother Gunhilda, says, "*Percussit eum cultello quem absconderat, et occidit* (Huntingdon tells this story as a report only); *corpus illa plumbo involvens in Stura flumine* (the little river of that name in Hampshire) *diu abscondit.*" According to Lupus's sermon, a. 1014 (Hickes, Dissert. Epist.), the corpse was burnt.

² Fl. W. Chron. Mailr. a 983. "propinquus."

³ W. Malm. "(Elferius) qui superiorem regem occiderat."

⁴ So not only Adam of Bremen (ii. 37), "*Adelrad parricidium expiavit;*" but Malmesbury also (ii. 10), *parricidio, cui conniventiam adhibuerat, immanis.*"



CHAPTER X.

A.D. 978-1007.

Æthelred's Character—Dunstan's Death—Ravages of Danes—Svend and Palnatoke—Wars—Olaf Tryggvason—Danegild—Landing of Northmen in Kent, Essex, and Sussex and on the Severn—Æthelred invades Cumberland—His Marriages—Massacre of Danes—Retribution—Ravages in Wessex—Dissensions among the Nobles.

AN attempt to place on the throne an elder child of Eadgar, his natural daughter Eadgyth, found little support,¹ and at Easter the boy Æthelred was crowned at Kingston, taking the coronation oath² which he was too weak to keep, and receiving the oath of fealty so often to be violated by his vassals. Dunstan, it is said, both at his baptism and coronation, foretold the

¹ That an elder brother of Æthelred named Eadmund, married to the daughter of a Welsh prince, attempted to ascend the throne, seems to be an error of Gaimar or his authority, where there is, perhaps, some confusion with Eadmund, the eldest son of Æthelred; though Theodoricus Monachus, de Reg. Norweg. c. 15, says of Olaf, the son of Harald, "*reconciliavit Adalredum fratribus suis, et ut in regem sublimaretur obtinuit.*"

² Sax. Chron. a. 978. See the oath in Hickes, Thes. [and Palgrave, ii. p. ccxliv. The following are its most important parts: "*Hæc tria populo Christiano et mihi subdito in Christi promitto nomine. In primis, ut ecclesia Dei et omnis populus Christianus veram pacem, nostro arbitrio, in omni tempore servet. Aliud, ut rapacitates et omnes iniquitates omnibus gradibus interdiciam. Tertium, ut in omnibus judiciis æquitatem et misericordiam præcipiam,*" etc.—T.]

unhappy reign of Æthelred, though it is probable that he did not exert his influence in awakening in the young prince's mind, by efficient education, the vigour and abilities of his forefathers. The poignant grief manifested by Æthelred at his brother's death shows that he was susceptible of deeper impressions.¹ His beauty and friendliness are extolled; yet the talents fostered in him were those only of a monk, and to a degree that has called forth even a monk's reproach.²

While Dunstan lived,³ the government continued sufficiently powerful to withstand attacks from without and to provide against internal distraction. After his death, which took place in the tenth year of Æthelred's reign, the loss of him whose strong hand had held together the heterogeneous and hostile peoples soon became manifest. Already in the first years of Æthelred's reign it appears that new swarms of pirates had issued forth from the North of Europe, which seems to have been brought to a state of comparative tranquillity by those powerful princes under whom it was consolidated into the three great kingdoms of Denmark, Sweden and Norway, in consequence probably of the age or weakness of the petty kings at this time, or rather, perhaps, by the struggle between the new religion and the old heathenism. The indulgence shown to the Northern emigrants by Eadgar has been blamed; but the opposite system demanded mightier means than opulence and luxury are in the habit of supplying against hunger and contempt of death. In one year Chester, the Isle of Thanet and Southampton were attacked by pirates, by

¹ W. Malm. ii. 10.

² Osborni Vita S. Elphegi, "imbellis, quia imbecillis monachum potius quam militem actione prætendebat."

³ He died in 988. Sax. Chron. h. a.

whom many of the inhabitants were slain, and others carried into slavery.¹ The kingdom of Dyved and its city St. David's were devastated by Harald, king of the Hebrides, and his son Guthfrith,² whose insular realm was a convenient trysting-place for the piratical swarms of the North. These misfortunes called to remembrance the crime which was regarded as their cause, and the corpse of the sainted Eadward was, as we have seen, solemnly buried at Shaftesbury;³ but the southern coasts of England, during the two following years, were not the less devastated by Northern pirates, and the wearying spectacle was renewed of incessant landings and skirmishes, such as England had experienced two hundred years earlier. If credit may be given to the Danish traditions, which at this time begin to assume a more historic character, the young viking Svend, the future king of Denmark and of the greater part of England,⁴ at this time made his first essay in naval warfare. The chieftain of Jomsburg, Palnatoke, a name alike renowned in history and song,⁵ had during his early voyages obtained the hand of Olofa (Olöf), the daughter of Stephen (Stefnir), a prince of Bretland, and received half of the inheritance.

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 980.

² Annal. Camb. aa. 982, 987. Annal. Ulton. Brut y Tyw. aa. 979, 981. Wynne's Caradoc, p. 61.

³ Sax. Chron. a. 980.

⁴ He had been expelled from Denmark by Eric the Victorious, king of Sweden, and not received by Æthelred, whose hospitality and aid he had solicited. See Adam of Bremen, lib. ii. c. 25.

⁵ See Wedel-Simonsen's 'Geschichtliche Untersuchung über Jomsburg im Wendenlande.' Danish, 1813, German, by L. Giesebrecht, 1827. Palnatoke subsequently gave his possession in Bretland to Björn Brezke and his grandson Vagn Akason. See Jomsvikingasaga. [Palnatoke was a son of Palmir, a son of Toke, hence the derivation of his name.—T.]

Palnatoke, who was the instructor and friend of Svend, a son by a peasant girl of the Danish king Harald Blátand, brought his pupil with him to the well-known shores of the British Channel. From the year 983, when we know that Svend was engaged in Denmark, there appears to have been a pause in the piratical attacks on the English coasts, though only, as it would seem, to give an opportunity for internal hostilities. After having led an army against Brecknock and other Welsh states, Ælfhere had died, devoured, it is said, by vermin,¹ although this may possibly be a figure of speech, pointing to a gnawing of conscience as the assumed cause of his death—a verdict which the popular hatred of the middle ages was prone to award to the object of its aversion—and was succeeded in the government of Mercia by his second son, Ælfric, his eldest son, Odda, having preferred the cloister to the cares and perils of rule. A few years after, Ælfric was banished, but, as it appears, soon recalled. A dispute, in which the bishop of Rochester was concerned, led the king to lay siege to that city. Being compelled to retreat, owing to the stout resistance offered by the inhabitants, he plundered and wasted the lands of the bishopric, undeterred by the mandate of Dunstan, which prohibited him from spoiling the possessions of St. Andrew, the patron of the city of Rochester. Nor did he desist from his ravages until he had extorted from the bishop a hundred pounds of silver, on which account his avarice (of which we are without the means of judging) is severely censured by the angry prelate.²

England's enemies on the ocean appear to have been

¹ Annal. Camb. a. 983. W. Malm. ii. 9.

² Osborni Vita Dunst. Sax. Chron. a. 986. K. Wendover, t. i. p. 423.

not uninformed of these internal dissensions. In the year immediately following they plundered Weceðport (Watchet), in Somersetshire, and Goda, thane of Devonshire, with a valiant chieftain named Strenwold, fell in a battle against these barbarians, who were, however, defeated with considerable loss. If the south-west position of the coast thus infested causes us to hesitate in supposing its assailants to be warriors from the Danish isles, to whom the eastern shore of England lay much more convenient, a suspicion seems by no means void of foundation against the Danes inhabiting the opposite coast of Normandy, who with baptism had very imperfectly divested themselves of their earlier habits and course of life. We find in that country, which had now been nearly eight years in possession of Rollo and his offspring, the race of the conquerors, or of the nobility, greatly increased, and their supernumeraries beginning their brilliant course of conquest in the south of Italy. These attacks, therefore, on the ports of England, it is easy to imagine, may have been a prelude, as it were, to the first war of importance between France and England, and to the peace concluded through the mediation of the holy father himself, of which the chroniclers of both the belligerent states have transmitted accurate accounts, though defective with respect to minor circumstances.]

An English army landed at Barfleur, and the soldiers obeyed but too literally the orders of Æthelred,—to burn or slay everything. So highly was he embittered, that he had commanded that nothing in Normandy should be left in its place but the rock of St. Michael, and that the marquis Richard the First¹ (surnamed Sans peur) should be brought bound before him. The

¹ Ricardi marchionis. W. Malm. ii. 10.—T.

impetuosity of the English at first did some damage to the Normans, but eventually more to themselves. Niel (Nigellus) of St. Sauveur assembled the despairing vassals of the Cotentin, by the side of whom even the women rushed to the conflict. Of the English, whose too rash advance had rendered retreat impracticable, only the messenger of the dreadful intelligence was left alive, to secure the salvation of the fleet and sailors, and to announce the disastrous event to king Æthelred. The pope John the Fifteenth, grieved at the intelligence of a bloody war between two neighbouring Christian princes, whose forces might have been more advantageously united for the suppression of the pagan robbers, sent his apocrisiarius Leo, bishop of Treves, to the king of Wessex, and, with the latter's consent, to Richard at Rouen, where a treaty of peace, still extant, and particularly remarkable on account both of its antiquity and of the parties interested, was after the celebration of the eucharist sworn to on March the first, A.D. 991, and sealed in the presence of the bishop of Sherborne and other eminent personages, both English and Norman.¹

¹ The document is preserved by W. of Malmesbury (ii. 10). The pope John XV. is sometimes called XVI.; the immediate successor of John XIV. having died before consecration, is not usually reckoned among the popes (see Mr. Hardy's note in *Malmesb. i.* p. 269). The bishop of Sherborne's name, Edelsinus, is evidently a clerical error for Æthelsius (Æthelsige). Wendover and, consequently, *Matt. Westm.* ascribe the quarrel in 991 to Æthelred's ill-treatment of Emma, to whom he was not married till 1002. It is remarkable that no other English authorities speak of this war, nor of another about that time with Normandy. The Norman writers also make no mention of a war under Richard I., but speak of one under Richard II., after Æthelred's marriage with Emma. See *Guil. Gemet. v. 4* (who is literally copied by Walsingham, *Ypod. Neust.*) and *Roman de Rou, v. 6216 sq.*, where Pluquet,

Æthelred's joy at this treaty must have been the greater, as the intelligence had without doubt reached him of an attack made by the Northmen on Ipswich, where Justin (Jósteinn) and Guthmund, probably in the service of the Norwegian king Anlaf or Olaf Tryggvason (who either accompanied them or arrived soon after), ravaged the country the more cruelly perhaps in revenge for a defeat they had suffered a few years before. The brave ealdorman Byrhtnoth, on being contumeliously challenged by the Northmen, encountered them at Maldon, where he died the hapless death of the vanquished.¹ So great was the panic caused by this deplorable event among the chief counsellors of Æthelred, that—yielding to the advice of the archbishop of Canterbury, Sigeric, of the ealdorman Æthelweard, and of Ælfric, the ealdorman of Mercia—he allowed them to purchase a peace for the provinces in which their respective possessions chiefly lay for the sum of ten thousand pounds, in consideration of which the two chieftains above-mentioned engaged to cease their

following a misinterpretation of the Sax. Chron., would place it in the year 1000: “se unfrið flota” (the words of the Chron.) are by Florence rightly expressed by “Danorum classis.”

¹ See the interesting fragment of a poem on his death, printed in the *Analecta Anglo-Saxonica*, from the text of Hearne at the end of *Joh. Glaston. Chron.*, where it is printed as prose. Conybeare, in his ‘*Illustrations*,’ has given a translation of it. See also *Hist. Eliens. lib. ii. c. 6*, ap. Gale, and *Hist. Rames. c. 71*. The Sax. Chron. records his death under 991, and again under 993. A short time before his death he gave all his lands to the church. See Palgrave, ii. p. cxxiii. The title of “dux Northanimbrorum” seems an error of the *Hist. Eliens. ii. 6*, though, after Osloc’s banishment, he might have been invested with Deira, which on the death of Byrhtnoth seems to have been conferred on Ælfhelm, who, a. 994, is styled “dux Transhumbranæ gentis.” *Monast. vi. p. 1446*. Gale, i. p. 522.

ravages in England, and to maintain firm peace. This is apparently the treaty alluded to in the preamble to another between the three Norwegian leaders, Anlaf (Olaf), Justin and Guthmund, wherein it is said that a sum of twenty-two thousand pounds had been given for the peace, from the conditions of which, viz. those relating to homicide, to breach of the peace, to the attaching of stolen goods, &c., it is evident that no immediate departure of the hostile army was contemplated. The precise date of this treaty cannot be ascertained, as no mention occurs in the chronicles of a payment of twenty-two thousand pounds; though it may be presumed to have taken place very shortly after that between the archbishop and the two ealdormen. By this treaty¹ it appears that the Danes or Northmen were admitted as guests, like the old German warriors (hospites), into provinces of England, where till then they were unknown, and, as in many similar cases, out of an apparently temporary state of things, a burthen arose not to be shaken off by peaceable means. At the same time, the levying of the tribute on the people gave rise to an impost, which, under the name of Danegild, continued as an odious and oppressive tax on the laity long after the object of its imposition had ceased to exist. The clergy were exempted from the payment of Danegild,² a benefit for which they are

¹ Considerable doubt exists as to the exact date of this treaty, but it is possible that it may be the one renewed in 994 with Anlaf, after the death of Siric (Easter 944). It is remarkable that no recent historians have noticed this important treaty.

² Leges Edw. tit. xi., where it is stated to have been a yearly payment of twelve pence for every hide of land; though it is probable that the amount occasionally varied. [Its object is there stated to have been, "ad eorum (Danorum) insolentiam reprimendam."—T.]

probably indebted to its original propounder, the archbishop Sigeric.

As in the following year the strangers still continued in the provinces they had occupied, Æthelred and his witan assembled a powerful fleet at London, the command of which he intrusted to his father-in law Thored, to the ealdorman Ælfric, and to the bishops of London and Dorchester, Ælfstan and Æscwig.¹ With this he hoped to capture the Danish fleet, but the well-formed plan was frustrated by the treason of Ælfric, who contrived to warn the enemy of the impending danger, and in the night preceding the intended attack passed over to them with his ship, and effected his escape with them. Though chased by the royal fleet, the loss of the Danes was one ship only, the crew of which was put to death. The London and East Anglian fleets, however, afterwards fell in with, and fought the Danish squadron, when many of the enemy were killed, and the vessel of Ælfric, which chanced to be among them, was captured with its crew, the traitor himself escaping with difficulty.² Thus prevented from glutting his

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 992. Fl. W. has Ælfgar, bishop of Wilton, and Æscwig.—T.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 992. I apply to this Ælfric the words of the document of 992, wherein Æthelred says, "comes Ælfric . . . contra meum regale imperium multa inaudita miserabiliter committens piacula." Consequently he cannot be the same with the "dux Ælfric," whose name appears to this document, and again in 994 (Monast. t. vi. 1446) and 1004 (Gale, i. 522). Nor can he have been "dux Merciorum" after 1006, as that dignity was then enjoyed by Eadric. The last-mentioned appears to be the one who fell in 1016 fighting against the Danes. According to Florence Eadwig or Eadwine, a brother of Ælfric, fell at Ringmere in 1010, though in the Chronicle he is called the brother of Ælfric. The older Ælfric is said to have had a brother, who died a monk in 1056. The above remarks are given solely to call attention to the

vengeance on Ælfric himself, the base Æthelred caused his son Ælfgar, of whose participation in his father's guilt there exists no evidence, to be deprived of sight.¹ From the southern parts the Danes now directed their course to the north of England, where the inhabitants, though of kindred race, at first stoutly opposed them. They, nevertheless, gained possession of Bamborough, which they plundered, and then sailed to the mouth of the Humber, where they committed dreadful ravages, both in Lindsey and Northumbria. A body of forces raised to oppose them, with their three leaders, Frænd, Godwine and Frithegist,² all of Danish extraction, treacherously betraying their trust, were the first who betook themselves to flight.³

In the following year, on the festival of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, a fleet of ninety-four ships arrived at London, commanded by the Norwegian king Olaf, with Svend, king of Denmark,⁴ who gave out that he came to take vengeance on Æthelred for his inhospitality, when as a fugitive he formerly landed on the shores of England.⁵ They endeavoured to take London by storm and to burn it, but they were beaten back with

confusion prevailing with regard to the Ælfrics, without pretending to remove it.

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 993.

² Fræna and Frithegist appear with many other officials of Eadgar bearing Danish names, as Cnut, Thurkytel, Thurgod. Gale, i. 519.

³ A petty warfare seems at this time to have been carried on against the Welsh: Annal. Camb. a. 993. "Guyn filius Eynaun, duce Edelisi (Æthelsige) Anglico, dextralium Britonum adjumento, regiones Maredut, i.e. Demetiam et Kerdigeauw, Guhir et Kedweli devastat."

⁴ Surnamed Tjúguskegg, *Double, or Forked-beard*.—T.

⁵ Saxo Gram. t. i. p. 496 sq. Adam. Brem. ii. 25.

considerable loss by the citizens, aided, as we are told, by the holy Virgin. Hence the hostile fleet proceeded to the coasts of Essex and Kent, and from thence to Sussex and Hampshire, burning, plundering and slaying, without regard to age or sex, in those devoted counties. Having now provided themselves with horses, they overran a considerable part of the interior of the country, their course being everywhere marked by the same atrocities. The miserable Æthelred, again listening to the faithless and factious courtiers who surrounded him, and incapable himself of deeds or even thoughts worthy of a king, again adopted the pusillanimous expedient of promising a contribution of sixteen thousand pounds, to raise which a tax was laid on the whole country. On receipt of this sum the enemy engaged to desist from further ravages, and returning to their ships stationed at Southampton, passed the winter there at the cost of the people of Wessex. Soon after these events, king Olaf, having received hostages for his safety, was conducted to Æthelred at Andover by Ælfheah, the venerable bishop of Winchester, and by Æthelweard, who three years before had negotiated with the Northmen in Essex, and whose name of "Fabius Quæstor Patricius Ethelwerdus" is already familiar to us through the well-known chronicle composed by him. Olaf in his youth, when on a piratical expedition, had landed on one of the Scilly islands, and there received baptism at the hands of a hermit. He was afterwards induced to return to Norway, at that time suffering under the tyranny of Hakon jarl, surnamed the Bad, and on his voyage thither had, by force of arms, converted the inhabitants of the Orkneys to the Christian faith. On the arrival of Olaf in the land of his fathers, Hakon fled, and was shortly after

murdered by one of his slaves, when Olaf was acknowledged king of all Norway. Æthelred gave the Norwegian monarch an honourable reception, loaded him with costly gifts, caused him to be confirmed by the bishop, and adopted him for his spiritual son. On his return home in the following summer he promised never again to visit England as an enemy, a promise which he faithfully kept.¹ He subsequently married a sister of his companion in arms, Svend, who afterwards became his deadly enemy. In the great sea-fight of Svöldr,² against the combined fleets of Svend and the Swedish king Olaf, king Olaf Tryggvason, seeing the battle irretrievably lost, leapt with the survivors of his crew into the waves.³ That he perished hardly admits of a doubt, though a story of his escape and subsequent travels was long current. In either case he vanished from the page of history. No mention is made on this occasion of Svend (Sweyn) or, as he was called by his imperial sponsor, Sveinotto. He probably accompanied Olaf, though without any military followers of his own, during one of his expulsions from the throne of Denmark. An attack made by him in this year on the Isle of Man is recorded. The first hostile attempt of the Northern vikings (called also in Germany Aescomannen) on the northern coast of that country, particularly that of the county of Stade,⁴ coincides in time with the departure of Svend and Olaf from Hampshire, and even if wholly unconnected with the last expedition to England, shows us how the north of Europe was then, as it were,

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 994. Theod. de Reg. Norweg. c. vii. Snorre in Olaf Tryggvason's Saga. Dahlmann's Gesch. v. Dänem. Bd. ii. s. 121.

² A.D. 1000.

³ Annal. Camb.

⁴ Adam. Brem. ii. 22. Ditmar. Merseburg.

shaken out of the state of tranquillity it had for many years enjoyed.

The greater part of the army of the two kings did not accompany them home, but was probably reinforced by new comers. In a few years the means of subsistence for the strangers could no longer be obtained from the already impoverished inhabitants of the neighbourhood, and the Danes resolved to equip their fleet and sail to other parts which for several years had been exempt from their depredations. Steering round Wessex, they landed in the mouth of the Severn, penetrated into the Welsh territories, which had till then been free from the burthen of Danegild; and next betook themselves to Devonshire and Cornwall, the northern coasts of which they laid under contribution and ravaged. They then sailed round Penwithsteort (the Land's end) and up the Tamar, where leaving their ships they proceeded to Lidford, burning and destroying everything in their course, including the noble abbey of Tavistock, founded by Ordgar, the father of Eadgar's queen Ælfthryth. Having thus for a short time satiated their thirst for destruction, they returned, laden with booty, to their ships.¹

In the following year they proceeded to the coast of Dorsetshire, the Isle of Wight and Southampton, where they renewed the work of devastation. The English made repeated attempts to bring the enemy to an engagement, but the unskilfulness or treachery of the commanders, of whom many were either connected with the Danes by relationship, or inclined to them from self-interest—and sometimes also those apparently insignificant mishaps, which, though unheeded by the bold, are wont, as it were, like heavenly judgments,

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 997. Malmesb. de Pont. lib. ii.

to pursue the disheartened to their perdition,—frustrated every plan of the well-intentioned among the people. The next spring beheld the same Danes on the Medway, where they besieged the city of Rochester. The men of Kent hastened to its relief, but were slaughtered by the barbarians, who, having obtained horses, ravaged that county to its western border, on which Æthelred with his witan resolved on the immediate equipment of a fleet.¹

As the excellent ordinances of Ælfred and Eadgar, though neglected, had not yet entirely lost their influence even on the weak and slothful, a fleet was soon made ready for active service at London; but an army, which should be able first to drive the enemy from the country, and compel him to seek safety on the ocean, could not so soon be brought together, owing to the want of general and decisive measures in the numerous small states of which the Anglo-Saxon monarchy was composed, each having its own privileges and pretensions. When the king and the witan, after a long protracted deliberation, had at length come to a decision, that decision had to be announced by the ealdorman to the county or shire-mote; repeated meetings of the thanes and their followers were then held, after which those capable of bearing arms presented themselves at the hundred-mote or wapentake of the shire. By this process much money and time were wasted; the willing follower was oppressed, leaders and gerefas quarrelled or procrastinated; the least and most contemptible private interest was made available, and the minutest points scrupulously discussed. At last, after the crops were gathered, masses heard, and family festivals celebrated, the royal army moved simultaneously from every

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 999.

district. In the meantime the Danes had drained the country, indulging in every passion, and, when their last gleanings had proved unproductive, they marched laden with booty in full security to their well-defended ships on the coast, deriding their weak enemy, rendered yet weaker by the burthensome and costly levy, and celebrating in joyful song Odin and Thor, Regnar Lodbrog and Hasting.

The warlike preparations in England were probably of some effect, as the Danes in the following spring deliberated as to which coast they should bend their course, and gave the preference to Normandy,¹ from which they were, however, soon driven by the duke Richard the Second. Æthelred availed himself of this short period of calm, and used the army raised against foreign invaders, to overrun the territories of those great vassals who had refused the payment of Danegild, a tribute not existing at the time of their original feudal compact, by which military service alone was required and promised. The army of Æthelred entered the smaller states, which were in alliance with the Cumbrian king Malcolm the Third, and there wreaked that vengeance which would have been more justly and patriotically directed against the Danes. The fleet, which was stationed at Chester, was ordered to sail round the north of the island, for the purpose of co-operating with the land forces, but was prevented by contrary winds from reaching its destination; its only achievement being to lay waste the Isle of Man.²

But even in such triumphs the English had but little leisure to rejoice. A Danish fleet arrived on the western

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1000.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1000. Fordun, iv. 35.

coast, which they ravaged with impunity. Many brave men were slain fighting against them in Hampshire, the valour of a few isolated bodies proving no barrier to the advance of the enemy. In Devonshire they burned Teignmouth and many other places, and were joined by the eorl Pallig, the husband of Gunhild, sister of the Danish king Svend, who, though a Dane, had been richly endowed by Æthelred with estates and money. Though prevented by the strong walls of Exeter and the brave defence made by the inhabitants from gaining possession of that important place, the Danes overcame the people of Devon and Somersetshire with great slaughter at Penho, whence they proceeded to the Isle of Wight, which, together with the neighbouring counties of Hampton and Dorset, they mercilessly ravaged. Æthelred and his witan now resolved to purchase peace by a new payment, and sent the ealdorman Leofsige to the Danes, with whom a truce was settled, by the conditions of which they were to receive pay and subsistence, besides the sum of twenty-four thousand pounds. The money was paid, but Leofsige had short enjoyment in the work of peace of which he had been the instrument. He slew Æfig, the chief officer (*heah-gerefa*) of Æthelred, for which he was sent into banishment,¹ a form of punishment of frequent application amongst the Anglo-Saxons, to whom it was especially hard, owing to their attachment to their native land and their old customs. By a general resolution of the *witan-gemot*, it was forbidden to harbour or aid the outlaw, and Æthelflæd, the sister of

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1002. Charter ap. Suhm, Bd. iii. s. 793. "Leofsinum, quem de satrapio nomine tuli ad celsioris apicem dignitatis, dignum duxi promovere ducem, constituendo eum," etc.

Leofsigē, was deprived of all her property, in consequence of having disregarded this injunction.

Æthelred had in his seventeenth year married Ælflæd, the daughter of the ealdorman Thored, the son of Gunner,¹ of whom mention has been already made, as commander of the royal forces. By this lady he had six sons (*viz.* Eadmund his successor, Eadwig, Æthelstan, Ecgbert, Eadred and Eadgar), and four daughters. After the death of Ælflæd, the rare beauty and accomplishments of Emma (the daughter of Richard the First, duke of Normandy, and sister of Richard the Second) led to a marriage between an English king and a foreign princess,² an event which had not taken place for many years, but which now seemed desirable, both on account of unavoidable dissensions at home arising from relations of the royal family, and as a support to the kingdom against foreign enemies. But the contemptible character of Æthelred turned that which was intended for his own and his country's happiness into the germ of total ruin for both. As the name of Emma,

¹ Malmesbury (ii. 10) appears not to have known her name: speaking of her son Eadmund, he says, "non ex Emma natus, sed ex quadam alia, quam fama obscura recondit." Schol. ad Adam. Brem. ii. 37, has probably under the corrupt reading 'Afficud' (*al. affiluit*) concealed the name of Ælflæd. The name of the king's father-in-law occurs in Ailred of Rievaulx, pp. 362, 372. On the other hand, the genealogy in Florence has "Hic ex Alfiva, comitis Agilberti filia, tres filios habuit, Eadmundum, Eadwium, et Æthelstanum, ac Eadgitham filiam." So Bromton also, a. 981, R. Higden, i. 269, only that they call her Edgiva, and her father Ecgbert. The children here named are also known from other sources; but Howell (*Medulla Hist. Anglie.*) mentions also as such Egbert, Eadred, Eadgar, probably from a document in the Monasticon, i. 216, and three daughters.

² Gaimar (*v.* 4134) is the first who mentions Æthelred's journey to Normandy.

the gem of the Normans,¹ sounded unpleasant to the Anglo-Saxon ear, she adopted that of Ælfgifu. Neither her beauty and mental endowments, nor even the children she bore to him, proved sufficient to fix the affection of the voluptuous and slothful Æthelred, who in the arms of a mistress recked little either of the misery of his country or the honour of his house.² At the same time, we may here, as in the most fitting place, observe, that although England's misfortunes bear witness but too incontrovertibly against the reign of Æthelred, yet, in the representation of the new relations just now beginning between England and Normandy, as well as of this entire last portion of Anglo-Saxon history, the greater number of the historians, who wrote after the conquest of England by the Normans (although they may not designedly have wronged the memory of the antagonists of the forefathers of William the Conqueror), introduce into their writings the hostile views, interpretations and traditions of the Normans relative to the Anglo-Saxons. Consequently, those writers to whom we are indebted for almost all our knowledge of that period of English history are to be followed with great mistrust, even when treating of an Æthelred.

By the Danish army which was enjoying ease in England, this connection must have been viewed with apprehension and jealousy. Previously to the last treaty with Æthelred in the beginning of the year, they could regard themselves as the masters of the country, not indeed through conquest recognised by the law of nations, but through fear inspired by the fire-brands and daggers of a fiendish swarm of plunderers

¹ H. Hunt. lib. vi. R. Higden, p. 271, "Gemma Normannorum."

² W. Malm. ii. 10.

and assassins. This third treaty was not made with the intention of being more scrupulously observed than the former ones : hence, as they had no intention of leaving the country, no time was to be lost in planning a fresh outbreak. Æthelred and Richard, Anglo-Saxons and Normans, might in the meantime become more closely united ; a young branch related to both nations might give birth to more intimate connections and new interests, to the prejudice of the pirate people : a plan, therefore, to destroy the king and the chiefs of the nation, and by this treachery to place the assassins in sole possession of the country, was soon formed, and might soon be executed.¹ The plot reached the ears of Æthelred, who with his counsellors could not, it seems, devise any other means of freeing themselves and the country from these insupportable and treacherous guests than by murder, the last resource of the weak. To every city and town of England letters were secretly despatched by Æthelred,² annulling the safeguard granted by compulsion to, and criminally abused by the Danes, and commanding the robbers living there to be put to death on St. Brice's day, under the protection of God and his saints. The order was received without horror, was not betrayed to the Danes, and was mercilessly executed. Atrocious cruelties are

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1002, Nov. 13, "because it was made known to the king that they would treacherously bereave him of his life, and afterwards all his witan ; and after that have his kingdom without any gainsaying." Fl. W. "quia illum suosque primates vita regnoque privare, et totius Angliæ dominium suæ ditioni conati sunt subdere." See also Sim. Dunelm. Matt. Westm. a. 1012, names as the king's counsellor in this affair "Huna quidam, militiæ princeps, vir strenuus et bellicosus, qui sub rege regni negotia disponenda susciperet."

² Ailred. Riev. p. 363. H. Hunt. R. Higden.

said to have been perpetrated during the massacre by the people rioting in vengeance, even towards English women attached to Danes, and the children of Danes. It was the height of impolicy, in the execution of this execrable mandate (which could find even an approach to palliation only in state-necessity), to allow so much licence to private hate. Gunhild, the sister of Svend and wife of the faithless jarl Pallig, was beheaded at the command of the royal favourite Eadric.¹ When about to suffer death, this heroic woman is said to have exclaimed in prophetic spirit, that the shedding of her blood would be at the cost of all England! She met her fate with an unchanged countenance, though her husband and son had just been slaughtered before her eyes. With regard to the extent of the massacre we are but insufficiently informed, but it cannot possibly have been executed in East Anglia and Northumberland, or in the Seven Burghs of Mercia, which we find afterwards, as before, in the possession of the old settlers of Danish race. It is probable that those doomed to destruction were chiefly the Danes and Norwegians who had remained in England from the army of Svend and Olaf. Great as the crime must ever appear to us, we should, nevertheless, not overlook the several grounds shown in the foregoing account for entertaining a less severe view of it, and bear in mind that neither Æthelred, nor his advisers, nor individuals were alone culpable, but that the entire outraged people, as far as they had been abused and oppressed by the insolent foreigners, combined with the fanaticism of national hate, in the performance of a deed which must have been previously intimated to all ranks, and even to the clergy. Nothing is more inconsiderate and

¹ W. Malm. ii. 10.

unjust than a comparison of St. Brice's day with the night of St. Bartholomew; a closer resemblance may be found in the struggle of the Britons under Boudicea, or in the Sicilian Vespers. Yet who would compare the Roman legions or the French warriors with the barbarians of the Baltic and German Ocean?

A judgment would undoubtedly have been pronounced on this deed widely differing from the usual one, if its result had been different. No sooner had the sad intelligence of the murder of his relations been communicated to Svend, whom his victory over Olaf of Norway had placed in a state of quiet and security, than an expedition to England, at the first favourable moment, was announced to his seamen. At a death-feast (erfi) holden in celebration of the death of Harald, his jarl in Scania (Skaane), by the sons of the latter, Sigwald, the successor of Palnatoke, and Thorkell, together with other Jomsvikings, the king vowed to conquer the realm of the fugitive or slain > Æthelred in three years.¹ He arrived with his fleet (having previously plundered the coast of Deheubarth)² on the coast of Devonshire, where, on account of its position with reference to the Danish territories, he was perhaps little expected. Possibly a treasonable compact might already have been entered into between Svend and the Norman count Hugo, who had by Emma's influence been appointed to the chief command in Devonshire. It was through his negligence or treachery that the Danes were enabled to take the city of Exeter, which they plundered, and having cast down the wall between the eastern and western gates, they returned laden with spoil to their ships. Svend

¹ Jomsvikinga Saga, p. 109.

² Annal. Camb. a. 1003. "Gentiles vastaverunt Demetiam."

now pressed forward into Wiltshire, where the men of the county immediately assembled, as well as those of Hampshire, in the resolution of boldly and vigorously expelling the invaders. The army was led by the same ealdorman Ælfric, who, as we have seen on a former occasion, betrayed his country to the enemy,¹ but whom Æthelred, induced probably by the relationship subsisting between them, had retained in his service and loaded with honours. When the two armies were in sight of each other, Ælfric had recourse to his old traitorous artifices, and feigned himself wholly incapacitated by a sudden and violent sickness from leading his men to battle, when the army, exasperated and depressed at the baseness of their commander, reluctantly retired before the face of their enemies. Svend now returned unmolested to his ships, having on his way plundered and burnt Salisbury and Wilton. This new treason of Ælfric seems, however, not to have been pardoned, as his name appears no more in history, and we find the ealdormanship of Mercia shortly after in other, though unfortunately not better hands; Eadric, surnamed Streona, or the Gainer, the son of Ægelric, a man of low extraction, whose name was already rendered execrable by the part enacted by him on St. Brice's day, being invested by Æthelred with that dignity, and having received from him the hand of his daughter Eadgyth.²

One of the few cheering phenomena of the time presents itself to us in the person of another son-in-law

¹ For the identity both the Chron. and Florence speak; yet it seems doubtful whether he was the same Ælfric who was banished. An Ælfric dux appears in a charter of Æthelred, a. 1012. See Suhm, l. c. Moreover, neither Wilts nor Hampshire belonged to Mercia.

² Fl. W. aa. 1007, 1009.

of the king, the East Anglian ealdorman Ulfcytel, surnamed Snilling, or the Sagacious, of Danish extraction, who had received in marriage Wulfhild, another daughter of Æthelred.¹ Svend, who in the following summer had undertaken another destructive expedition to England, now directed his course to East Anglia, where he burnt the city of Norwich. Ulfcytel, taken by surprise, saw himself compelled with his witan to purchase peace from the enemy, who, after a lapse of three weeks, violated the compact and burnt Thetford. Hereupon Ulfcytel collected his forces, hastened to encounter the Danes as they were returning to their ships, and gave them battle with a valour and resolution, which compelled them to fight as they had never before fought in England. The noblest of the East Anglians fell, but not a Dane would have escaped, had Ulfcytel's order to destroy their ships been executed.² To this neglect or treachery the Danish king owed his safety, and his ability to take up his winter-quarters in England. The fresh remembrance of Ulfcytel's sword (which had taught him how disastrous when not favoured by treason his conflicts were with brave men), together with a famine that had manifested itself in the country, which, in consequence of the dreadful piratic system of the North, was also afflicted with other innumerable calamities, induced him, however, to return home with his army, without having as yet fulfilled his vow of conquest.

At midsummer Svend landed again, from a numerous fleet at Sandwich, plundering and burning as usual

¹ Salm, Hist. af Danm. Bd. iii. p. 431; in charters of 970 and 1004. The Chronicle does not call him an ealdorman; Florence only names him "dux East Anglorum."

² Fl. W. a. 1004.

wherever he went. Æthelred now assembled an army in Wessex and Mercia, though to very little purpose; for, after remaining in the field during the autumn, without being able to bring on an engagement with the Danes, who continued their ravages without interruption till the winter, the newly raised forces returned to their homes, and those of Svend retired to the Isle of Wight, where they took up their quarters. During this wretched attempt at warfare on the part of Æthelred, his army appears to have been little less injurious to the inhabitants than that of their more barbarous foes. At midwinter the army of Svend left its quarters, and marched through Hampshire into Berkshire to Reading, and thence to Wallingford, burning and plundering during their progress, or, as the Chronicler expresses it, "they lighted their war-beacons as they went." They then marched over Æscedûn (Ashdown), by Winchester, where the grief-worn citizens might behold them insolently passing by the city-gates, laden with spoil, on their way to the sea. Every part of Wessex was now marked with the firebrand and with blood; Æthelred in the meanwhile taking shelter in Shropshire. His counsellors, who were wholly incapable of turning the arms of the people to any good purpose, could devise no other expedient under these calamities than the offer to the ruthless enemy of a payment larger than any of the former ones; and for thirty-six thousand pounds of silver—the largest sum probably that the financial resources of the time could produce—king Svend vouchsafed to grant a fallacious peace.¹

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1007. Some MSS. of the Chronicle, H. Hunt. and R. Higden read 30,000.

CHAPTER XL.

A.D. 978-1016.

Continuation of Reign of Æthelred the Unready—Eadric's Brothers—Their Dissensions—Rebellion—Ship-money—The Fleet—Landing of Sea-kings—Large Sums paid for Peace—Canterbury besieged—Anarchy and Confusion—Misery—Barbarities—Wars—Flight of Æthelred—Death of Danish King—Return of Æthelred—Eadric Streona—His Treachery—Landing of Cnut—Ædmund.

THE greatest misery under which England at that time groaned, and which alone accounts for the endless calamities inflicted on it by foreign domination, as well as for the abasement and extinction of the Anglo-Saxon name, was the anarchy that prevailed between the high nobility and the officials of the court. Against the former Æthelred sought relief among the favourites who flattered his vanity ; but, as it frequently happens, this expedient proved worse than the evil it was intended to counterbalance. In attestation of this remark, some instances have already appeared ; but Eadric, who owed his riches and dignities alone to audacity and a pliant tongue, excelled in shameless treachery, in selfishness reckless of all moral obligation, in pride and cruelty, all who had ever borne the Anglo-Saxon name. Wulfgeat, who had long been the chief favourite of the king, was deprived of all his wealth and honours, probably through the machinations of Eadric, and on account of his mal-administration of justice, and his arrogance.

Ælfhelm, the powerful ealdorman of Deira, having been invited by Eadric to a great wedding entertainment at Shrewsbury, was, on the third or fourth day, induced by his perfidious host to accompany him on a hunting party, at which he was basely assassinated by a butcher hired by Eadric for the purpose. Wulfgeat's sons, Wulfheah and Ufegat, were shortly after deprived of sight¹ by order, or rather, in the name, of Æthelred.

In the view of providing for the safety of the country more efficiently than by pecuniary contributions, which, while they exhausted the national resources, acted only as inducements to new invasions, Æthelred now resolved on the formation of a powerful navy, for the accomplishment of which praiseworthy object an ordinance was issued, in pursuance of which every three hundred and ten hides² throughout the kingdom was obliged to furnish a ship of war, and every nine hides a helmet and a coat of mail.

With Eadric all his brothers, Brihtric, Ælfric, Goda, Æthelwine, Æthelweard and Æthelmær, rose to high honours, but, in the year after Eadric's elevation to the highest ealdormanship, that of Mercia, they were opposed to each other in bloody strife. Brihtric, who appears not to have been lacking in any of the vices of the most fortunate among his brothers, had preferred to the king

¹ Eadric stands at the head of all the laity in a charter of 1012, in Suhm, Hist. Bd. iii. s. 795; where also the names appear of most of his brothers, and "Godwine miles." It is possible that the "Ælfric dux," there referred to, may have been his brother. Many of the names of the family are included in the list of Eadgar's "ministers" (Gale, i. 518). Goda may have been the minister ("Satrapa") of that name who fell in the year 988.

² H. Hunt. a. 1008. "Hida Anglice vocatur terra unius aratri culturæ sufficiens per annum." For the variations of the hide, see Ellis's Introd. to Domesday, p. 145.

an accusation against Wulfnoth, the son of his brother Æthelmær. "Wulfnoth child, the South Saxon,"¹ as he is styled by the Saxon Chronicler, placing little confidence either in the goodness of his cause, or in the justice of his adversaries, fled, and, having collected a small squadron of twenty vessels, became a rover on the ocean and a plunderer along the coast even of his own country. His uncle Brihtric sailed in quest of him with eighty ships, in the confident hope of taking him alive or dead; but a violent storm drove his vessels on shore, and they were subsequently burnt by Wulfnoth. This loss was the more lamented, as the vessels were part of the fleet just raised to act against the foreign enemy, and for the equipment of which the nation had, as we have seen, been charged with a very heavy burden. A greater fleet, we are told, had never been raised in Britain.² In Sandwich, where they were assembled, near a thousand ships are said to have lain; while defensive armour for forty thousand men was collected. These estimates are, however, in the highest degree questionable, as the calculation of two hundred and forty-three thousand six hundred hides in England south of the Humber rests on very unintelligible notices;³ nor is it said whether the same hides which furnished a ship, contributed also to supply a helmet and a coat of mail. Had such a vast number of ships been really equipped, it is difficult to imagine how the loss of eighty only could have been regarded as so serious.

¹ So Sax. Chron. a. 1009. Fl. W. a. 1008. "Suth-Saxonum ministrum Wulnothum." H. Hunt. a. 1009. "Wlnod puerum nobilem Sudsexe."

² H. Hunt. a. 1009.

³ See the list in Gale, t. i. p. 748, but more correct in Gibson's Camden, and Spelman's Glossary.

The novelty of the above-mentioned way of raising a fleet consisted probably only in the distribution of the burden, since we find similar fellowships for the building of a ship at an early period throughout the North. Ælfred's naval constructions were probably founded on a like principle. We may, however, at all events, notice throughout the reign of Æthelred what an admirable teacher of state-policy is necessity. Like Danegild, ship-money also long continued in use; and in both (if we do not include ecclesiastical imposts) may be sought the beginning of direct taxation in England. At the same time it ought to be remarked, that the first introduction or alteration of such general impositions in times of weakness appears to afford a sufficient proof of the existence of assemblies, in which the proprietors of the hides either personally or by their deputies, sitting or standing around, took part. But with less doubt we may perceive an opulence unknown at an earlier period in the so repeatedly exhausted country, and the beginning of a money-circulation, by means of which the smallest proprietor was enabled to pay imposts of this description. Worthy of notice also are the accounts that have reached us relative to the sums, immense for that period, which were paid by the religious foundations towards the wars and in other cases, to which their immunities did not extend;¹ but

¹ It would appear from some accounts that the abbey of Crowland had been cruelly impoverished both by Æthelred and his generals, under the plea of raising money for the Danes, and also by the Danish chiefs; so that from the year 1005 till the arrival of Svend, considerable sums had been extorted from the abbey. On his arrival, Svend demanded a sum of 1000 marks, threatening, in the event of non-compliance, to burn the structure. This exaction was speedily followed by another of equal amount for victualling his army: shortly after, Æthelred, supposing the abbot Godric still

of far greater importance is the observation that, amid all the misfortunes of the kingdom, the peasant or ceorl appears as a free member in the general political confederation, as he had been, at an earlier period, in the small states, the gilds and other unions. Too instructive to be omitted for the illustration of the condition of the small free proprietors in this country is the combination of the Norman peasantry against duke Richard the Second, who, for the purpose of obtaining divers privileges and immunities, held a great parliament, to which each commune sent two delegates;¹ while the importance of the good-will of the Anglo-Saxon peasantry to their prince, when it was wisely directed, is fully shown in the case of the son of Æthelred.

But we must turn from the more attractive and instructive lessons to be drawn from Anglo-Saxon history to the wearying but indispensable narratives of battles and skirmishes, which,—while the highest destinies of the nation, the germ of its quiet and gradual development or of its inevitable relapse into barbarism, and the origin of its most influential institutions, continue covered with an almost impenetrable veil,—form nearly the sole fragments preserved to us of the history of the country, and are, therefore, usually regarded as

in possession of much treasure, also demanded money, pretending to regard him as an accomplice of the Danes, and a traitor to his country. In this dilemma, Godric having summoned the brethren before him, and showed them that the treasury was exhausted, demanded their advice, when it was resolved to seek the protection of some powerful chief. The person selected was Northman, son of earl Leofwine, who, in consideration of a grant of the manor of Badby for a hundred years, declared himself the agent and protector of the abbey against all its enemies.—T.

¹ Guil. Gemet. v. 2, and more fully in Roman de Rou. v. 5975 sq.

the sole facts to be recorded. Sigvald, the former chief of Jomsburg, of whom mention has been already made, had a short time previously been slain in one of the expeditions against England,¹ when his brother Thorkell (Thorketil), surnamed the Tall,² to avenge his blood, landed from forty ships; while, some months after, his younger brother Heming and Eilif, the son of Thorkell, arrived at Thanet. Having united their forces, they sailed to Sandwich, and thence rapidly proceeded to Canterbury, which they would have taken, had not the citizens purchased peace with a payment of three thousand pounds of silver. Æthelred hereupon sent envoys to his brother-in-law at Rouen, imploring his advice and succour, but how far the mission was successful is unknown.³ Like their predecessors, these experienced Jomsvikings sailed to the Isle of Wight, and soon like them commenced their plundering and murderous expeditions to the neighbouring counties, Sussex, Hants and Berkshire, which had not yet recovered from the preceding ravages. Æthelred now placed himself at the head of his army, and, profiting by the good disposition of his men, took a position which would have enabled him to intercept the Danes on their return to their ships, had not the traitor Eadric, as was his wont, deluded him by false counsel, while the enemy retired unmolested. Notwithstanding the large sum so recently paid to them for peace by the people of Canterbury, the Danes returned to Kent, and plundered on both sides of the Thames; but an attack made by them on London proved unsuccessful. In the

¹ *Encomium Emmæ*, ed. Maseres, p. 7.

² Concerning Thorkell or Thorketil, see Langebek, t. ii. s. 458-463.

³ H. Hunt. a. 1009.

following year they sailed to East Anglia and landed near Ipswich, where they were encountered at Ringmere¹ by Ulfeytel, at the head of a body of forces drawn from several counties. In this engagement the East Anglians fled, the men of Cambridge alone maintaining their ground, although they at length were also compelled to flee. Many were slain : among others mention is made of Æthelstan, a son-in-law of the king.² Thurkytel, a Danish thane, surnamed Myran-heafod, or 'Mare's-head,'³ is stigmatized as the first who took to flight. The Danes remained masters of the field, and, having provided themselves with horses, plundered the surrounding country. Thetford and Cambridge were laid in ashes. The course of the Thames and its tributary streams marks the ulterior movements of the Danes, which it would be both wearying and useless to follow in further detail. Owing to their skill, or rather to the unskilfulness and treachery of the Anglo-Saxon commanders, the hostile armies never met face to face. The plans of the Saxons never came to maturity ; the greatest dissensions burst forth, each ealdorman seeking only his own safety, while one province would not fight for another. Not until half England had been ravaged by Thorkell and his followers⁴ did king Æthelred and his

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1010. Florence and Simeon give the name of the place, which is probably the present Rushmere Heath near Ipswich. Snorre had also heard of Ulfkil's battle at "Ringmara Heidi," but supposes it to have been fought after the death of Svend, against Æthelred and his allies. See Olaf Haraldsson's Saga, c. xiii. In using Snorre as a source of history, great care should be employed in investigating and correcting his errors.

² Sax. Chron. "þæs cynges aðum." Fl. W. "gener regis."

³ Fl. W. "Equæ caput." H. Hunt. "Caput formicæ." The latter interpretation is from the O. N. 'maur,' *formica*.—T.

⁴ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1011.

witan resolve to conclude a treaty of peace with the victorious enemy, on the usual condition of a large pecuniary payment, which, ever exceeding the preceding one, was now raised to forty-eight thousand pounds. Wales was at this time ravaged, and St. David's destroyed by the Anglo-Saxons,¹ probably on account of a refusal on the part of that people to contribute to the heavy imposition laid on the nation. Canterbury was again besieged by the Danes, and resolutely defended by its inhabitants. On the twentieth day of the investment, a part of the city was set on fire by the treachery of Ælfmær, the infamous abbot of St. Augustine's, whose life had formerly been saved by the venerable archbishop Ælfheah. By this deed of villainy an entrance was obtained, and the city taken. Of the inhabitants some perished by the sword, some in the flames, while others were precipitated from the walls, or put to death by torments, from the recital of which the reader would shrink with horror. Men, women and children were indiscriminately the victims of these demons in human form. The archbishop was taken and cruelly misused, together with Godwine, bishop of Rochester, Leofrun, abbess of St. Mildred's, and others. The execrable Ælfmær was allowed to escape.² Having plundered the cathedral, they committed the venerable structure to the flames. The remaining inhabitants, including those of the religious orders, were decimated without regard to age or sex. After the massacre of the citizens and the sack and conflagration of the city, the archbishop, though severely wounded, was dragged

¹ Annal. Camb. a. 1012. "Menevia a Saxonibus, vastata est, scil. Edris et Ubis." Also Annal. Eccl. Meneviæ.

² His name appears to a charter of Cnut to Christ's church. Palgrave, ii. p. ccxxvi.—T.

on board one of the Danish ships, and afterwards cast into a prison, where he continued seven months. At the expiration of that time, being brought before the Danes, a ransom of three thousand pounds was demanded from him; on his refusing to comply with this extortion, a week's respite was allowed him, when, being again led before them, he not only persisted in his refusal, but strictly forbade his friends to pay for him the sum required. The Danes, we are informed, were the more exasperated against the prelate from his having previously agreed to pay them a ransom.¹ Heated now with wine from the south, they rushed on their victim, whom with the backs of their battle-axes they felled to the earth, at the same time hurling at him stones, bones, and the skulls of oxen, the remnant of their barbarous gluttony. At length a Dane named Thrum, whom he had confirmed the day before, moved by a species of compassion, clove his skull with his battle-axe.²

It is not improbable that some extraordinary cause

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1012. The contemporary bishop Dittmar of Merseburg (lib. vii.) supplies the earliest circumstantial narrative (founded on information sent to him) of this event. According to his account, Thorkell strove to save Ælfheah from the fury of the Danes. Dittmar, however, gives Ælfheah the name of Dunstan.

² A Life of Ælfheah, composed about 1070, and ascribed to Osbern, is printed in Wharton, A. S. t. ii., and in Mabillon, Acta SS. April 21, also abridged in Surius, t. ii. p. 188 sq. The latter part of this work, i.e. as far as the Danes are concerned, is printed also with some illustrations in Langebek, Scriptt. Rer. Dan. t. ii. p. 439 sq. Florence has taken some matter from it verbatim, e.g. a. 1007, the character of Eadric; also, a. 1011, the cruelties perpetrated at Canterbury; unless each has used a common source, which is the less improbable, as in other respects there is little agreement between them.

may have embittered the Danes against the unfortunate archbishop, although his zealous endeavours to bring about peace, and the success that had occasionally attended his efforts to convert their countrymen to the faith of Christ, may have afforded sufficient grounds for their animosity. The biographer of Ælfheah relates some particulars either unknown to, or not deemed credible by the other English historians.¹ By him we are told that Eadric Streona himself led the Danes at this last siege of Canterbury. One of his brothers² had been appointed to a high official dignity in Kent, but, in consequence of his oppression and rapacity, had been slain in his dwelling by the exasperated nobles. From the king, who was unwilling to punish what he probably regarded as a pardonable act of self-redress, Eadric could obtain no means of glutting his vengeance, and invaded Kent at the head of ten thousand men, who had followed him in defiance of the king's will. Meeting with a stout resistance, he called upon the Danes stationed at Sandwich to aid him in avenging the death of his brother. In what follows, relative to the capture of the city, no mention is made of the traitorous abbot Ælfmær. Osbern, or whatever later monk it may be under that name, seems in error on this, as well as on other points, when he asserts that king Svend was at that time dead. The manifold treasons of Eadric may

¹ Bromton had Osbern's work before him. On both of these Palgrave probably founded the account given by him in his *History of England*, i. p. 297.

² Osbern designates this brother of Eadric with the same words as Florence (a. 1008) when speaking of Birhtric, viz. "*lubricus et superbus*." The "*nobilitas Cantuariorum*" renders this story not much less questionable than the large number of Eadric's soldiers. Æthelred, then in his forty-sixth year, is said to be "*senio contabescens*."

easily have caused confusion in the mind of a hearer or superficial reader; Thorkell's vengeance for the death of his brother Sigvald may have been confounded with Eadric's for the murder of his brother; while, on the other hand, a glance at the events immediately following, as well as at the traitorous part enacted in connection with them by Eadric, shows that at that time he had not lost all the confidence of his king and countrymen; but had, nevertheless, perpetrated deeds which go far to account for the confusion prevailing in the limited mind of the biographer.

A consequence of the peace was that Thorkell with forty-five of his ships passed into the service of Æthelred, engaging to defend the country against its foreign enemies, in consideration, it is said, of food and clothing, but more probably in return for a grant of part of East Anglia.¹ During these events Svend had formed the resolution of profiting by the success of his people in England, and of following up so favourable an opportunity for the accomplishment of the vow which he had made to the vikings of Jomsburg.² He therefore needed no invitation from Thorkell, even if such were conceivable, or could be otherwise than prejudicial to that individual under his new engagements.³ Leaving, then, the administration of affairs in Denmark to his son Harald, Svend, accompanied by his other son Cnut (Knud), and Olaf, the future sainted king of Nor-

¹ W. Malm. ii. 10.

² According to the *Annal. Camb.* a. 1011, Svend suffered shipwreck at this time.

³ What Malmesbury (ii. 10) relates of such an invitation is highly improbable; but his accounts of many of these events are at variance with the other chroniclers, e.g. according to him the last contribution was 8000 pounds, and the number of Danish ships which followed Æthelred only fifty.

way,¹ arrived in the spring at Sandwich,² whence, after a stay of a few days only, he sailed to the mouth of the Humber, and proceeding up the Trent, pitched his camp at Gainsborough. Here Uhtred, the powerful earl of Northumberland, submitted to his authority, his example being followed by the Danish Five-Burghers, and soon after by all the people to the north of the Watling Street, where hostages were delivered to him from among the noblest families, whom he intrusted, together with his fleet, to the custody of Cnut. Crossing now the Watling Street, he bent his course to Oxford and Winchester, which submitted to his authority and gave hostages.³ The devastation and barbarities committed by the order of Svend during his march exceeded all former atrocities perpetrated by the Northmen. The fields were laid waste, the towns and villages burnt, the churches plundered, and the entire male population put to the sword. An appalling picture of these calamities is given in the sermon of

¹ Adam. Brem. lib. i., Theod. de Reg. Norw. c. 15, mention his residence in England, though with a mixture of the fabulous. See Snorre, St. Olaf's Saga, cc. 24-26. Laws of Eadward, tit. xvi. in Anc. LL. and Inst.

² The author of the *Encomium Emmæ* (p. 8) gives a glowing and highly *poetical* description of the fleet. He speaks of the brazen beaks of the ships; of the lions of molten gold on their sterns; on the mast-heads of some were weathercocks resembling birds, and dragons spouting forth flames from their nostrils. Here were figures of men glittering with solid gold or silver; there bulls with heads erect, imitating the roar and movements of living ones; dolphins of electrum were also to be seen. He would have spoken of their sculptured ensigns, had he known the names of the monsters represented on them. Even the sides of the vessels were rough with gold and silver imagery, etc. See description of Cnut's fleet, p. 226.—T.

³ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1013.

Lupus¹ (bishop Wulfstan), written at this time; but horrible as the picture is, the laws, both secular and ecclesiastical, enacted under Æthelred, sufficiently prove that his representation of the degraded condition of the people is not too highly coloured. Traffic in human beings had become an important branch of commerce. What has been rarely known among the debased Negro tribes, brother sold brother, the father his son, the son his mother! Terror of the ferocious Northmen had deadened every energy. In battle one Dane was sufficient to withstand ten or more Englishmen; and whole bodies of Christians had been seen to flee before two or three Northern pirates. Since the great migration of nations (as the final close of which these Danish invasions may be regarded) history affords no equally perfect and striking picture of national degradation and misery inflicted by barbarous hordes on a civilized, but corrupt and effeminate people. Though the Anglo-Saxons were not, perhaps, so deeply sunk as the Romans at the time to which we allude, yet the hostile element was infinitely worse, as no Germanic nation was ever so thoroughly depraved as those sea-robbers were through long exercise of a calling most revolting to human nature. The evil had, however, now arrived at a height which may be regarded as its acme, and the acknowledgment of Svend at Bath by Æthelmær the ealdorman of Devonshire, by the thanes of Wessex and the citizens of London,—who for a short time, with king Æthelred among them, and his new vassal Thorkell at their head, had defended themselves against the warriors of Svend,—prepared the transition to a state of less calamity, at the same time that it promoted

¹ Printed in Hickes (Dissert. Epist. p. 99 sq.), edited by W. L. Elstob; also in a separate edition by the same editor.

the introduction of Christianity into the North, as well as the union and subsequent peaceable independence of those kingdoms.

Through the defection of his ealdormen, thanes and people, Æthelred found himself without friends or subjects, bereft alike of his kingly and individual rights. His queen, accompanied by Ælfsige, abbot of Peterborough, fled to her brother Richard, of whose disposition doubts might reasonably be entertained, in consequence of a treaty of friendship concluded between him and Svend, by which the Danes were allowed to sell in Normandy the plunder which they had collected in England. The two young princes, Eadward and Ælfred, were sent shortly after to their mother, under the care of Ælfhun, bishop of London, and Æthelred himself was now compelled to yield his kingdom to the Danes and flee. With some treasures that he had buried at Winchester,¹ he sought a temporary asylum in the Isle of Wight, which, after a long occupation, was now abandoned by the Danes; and hence, after Christmas, he passed across the Channel to his brother-in-law, who gave the unfortunate king an honourable and hospitable reception.²

A favour of fortune, wholly unexpected, was now bestowed on Æthelred the Unready. In the second month after his arrival in Rouen, messengers from England announced the sudden death of Svend, in an

¹ Guil. Gemet. v. 7, but who, as well as Adam of Bremen, blends together the two expeditions of Svend in 1003 and 1012.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1013. Guil. Gemet. Roman de Rou, the author of which, however, usually had before him only William of Jumièges, as a comparison of the two will sufficiently prove. The editor Pluquet has singularly always the name of king Alred or Æthelred for Ælfred, though Wace himself (v. 6444) calls him Aluered.

assembly holden at Gainsborough.¹ When apprised of the death of their king, the Danish fleet immediately proclaimed the young prince Cnut for his successor. According to another account, it appears that Svend, sensible of his approaching dissolution, called to him his son Cnut, whom, after many exhortations to apply to the study of Christianity, he named as his successor, with the unanimous approbation of the Danes. His last request was, that, should his son ever return to the land of his birth, he would convey his father's corpse thither, and not suffer it to rest in a foreign and hostile country. [The witan, however, of England, both lay and clerical, unanimously resolved to send for Æthelred, and to declare to him that no king was dearer to them than their natural lord, if he would rule over them more justly than he had hitherto done. For once in his life Æthelred showed himself not slothful. He immediately sent his son Eadward with envoys, who were ordered—we probably possess the words of the proclamation—"to greet all his people, and to assure them that he would be to them a loving lord, and amend all things which they all misliked, and that each of

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1014, Feb. 3. According to Florence, Svend had demanded a large contribution from the town of St. Edmundsbury, threatening, if it were not immediately paid, to burn both the town and its inhabitants, destroy the abbey, and torture the clergy in divers manners. At an assembly holden at Gainsborough he repeated these threats, and though surrounded by his guards, St. Edmund (visible to Svend only) approached him, and pierced him through with his spear, when he fell from his steed, and towards daybreak expired in unspeakable torments. The Knytlinga Saga (p. 184) informs us, that Englishmen say that the holy king Eadmund (Játmund) slew him in the same manner as St. Mercurius slew Julian the Apostate. For the Legend of St. Mercurius, see the 'Sermones Catholicici,' vol. i. p. 449, printed for the Ælfrie Society.—T.

those things should be forgiven which had been done or said to him, on condition that they all, with one consent, would be obedient to him without deceit." And they then established full friendship by word and by pledge on either side, and declared every Danish king an outlaw from England for ever.¹ During Lent Æthelred returned to his country, where he was joyfully received by the people. Cnut in the meantime remained at Gainsborough, where he levied on the people of Lindsey a contribution of horses for his army, with the design of plundering and ravaging the country. Towards Lindsey Æthelred now marched with his whole army, plundering and burning and slaying wherever he went in this faithless province. Through the unwonted celerity of Æthelred's movements, Cnut was prevented from carrying into effect the measures he had contemplated, and withdrew to his ships, with which he sailed southwards, having on board the hostages that had been delivered to his father, whose hands, ears and noses he caused to be cut off. On his arrival at Sandwich he set them on shore, and with sixty of his ships sailed to Denmark. In the hurry of departure Cnut forgot, or was unable to take with him for sepulture in Denmark, the corpse of his father, which had been conveyed to York, where an English matron caused it to be embalmed and carefully inwrapt, and some time afterwards in a vessel prepared for the purpose, she accompanied it herself to Seeland, where it was received by his sons Cnut and Harald, and by them deposited in the church of the Holy Trinity at Roeskilde, in a tomb prepared by Svend himself near his father's grave.² In addition to

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1014.

² Encom. Emmæ, pp. 9, 12. Sim. Dunelm. a. 1014. Ditmar Merseb. G. Gaimar, v. 4157 sq.

the miseries inflicted on the country during this ignominious reign, a contribution of twenty-one thousand pounds¹ was now imposed by Æthelred for the army under Thorkell stationed at Greenwich. Regarding England as lost, Cnut on his arrival in Denmark endeavoured, though vainly, to prevail on his brother Harald to divide that kingdom with him, and having failed in this, he undertook, in common with his brother, an expedition against the Wends.

A ray of peace and security, though a very transient one, now beamed on England; but it had hardly been left to itself, when in the following year internal feuds broke out afresh. During a witena-gemot holden at Oxford, the two powerful thanes of the Danish Seven Burghs, Sigeferth and Morcar, the sons of Earngrim, were invited to a banquet by Eadric Streona, who, when they were overcome with wine, caused them to be murdered by his armed followers. The attendants of the two thanes, who attempted to defend or avenge their masters, were put to flight, and compelled to seek shelter in the tower of the church of St. Fritheswith, now the cathedral, which—finding it impracticable to dislodge them by other means—Eadric or his sovereign commanded to be set on fire. [These foul deeds are supposed to have been perpetrated with at least the connivance of Æthelred, a supposition countenanced, if not confirmed by his seizure of the possessions of the murdered chiefs, and by his order for the conveyance of Ealdgyth, the widow of Sigeferth, as a prisoner to Malmesbury. Here she was seen by Edmund, the eldest son of Æthelred, who, against his father's will, made her his wife, and shortly after proceeded to the Five

¹ Sax. Chron., H. Hunt. a. 1014, Fl. W. and Sim. Dunelm. give 30,000 pounds as the amount.

Burghs, where he took possession of the property of the two thanes, and reduced the people to subjection.¹ Thorkell, not feeling confident, perhaps, in his ability to execute alone his ambitious designs, had in the meantime deserted from Æthelred, and with nine ships sailed to Denmark, leaving in England thirty ships, well-armed, and manned with faithful and stout warriors. Cnut happened to be walking by the sea when Thorkell arrived, and, doubtful of the reception that awaited him, the latter did not at first venture to land. But having soon made his peace with his master, and assured him of the facility with which the conquest of England might be effected, a fleet of two hundred sail² was, with the aid of the young Swedish king Olaf, soon equipped. Among those on board were the jarl Eric of Norway³ (who had married Gytha, a natural daughter of king Svend, and who with his brother Hakon had governed that country⁴) and the jarl Ulf, son of Thorgils Sprakalegg, and grandson of Styrbjörn by a daughter of Harald Blátand. A glowing picture of the sufficiency as well as splendour of this fleet is given by the author of the ‘*Encomium Emmæ*’: who, after alluding to the vast number of missiles and the variety of shields with which it was supplied,

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1015, between the 15th Aug. and 8th Sept.

² So *Encom. Emmæ*. Fl. W. a. 1015, “*cum magna classe* ;” Ditmar has 340 ships, each with 80 men ; Olaf Tryggvason’s Saga, 800 ships ; Adam. Brem. “*mille navibus Cnut armatus*.” So trustworthy are numerical accounts ! Ditmar says, moreover, that Harald, Cnut’s elder brother, accompanied him.

³ Adam. Brem. ii. 36. “*Cnut pactum iniit cum fratre, filio Herici, qui regnavit in Suedia, ejusque fultus auxilio deliberavit . . . Angliam subjugare*.”

⁴ Eric had already been driven out of Norway, to which kingdom St. Olaf had returned after the death of Svend.

goes on to say,—“so great was the brilliancy of the ships, that, seen from afar, they more resembled flames than wood: the prows were resplendent with gold and silver; the figures of lions, of men and of dragons glittering with gold gave to them so formidable an aspect, that the very sight of them would suffice to strike an enemy with terror, before the warriors which they bore commenced the onset.” In the whole armament not a slave nor a freedman was to be found, nor one of ignoble race, nor any enfeebled by age; but all were noble, all in the full vigour of life, all skilled in every kind of warfare, and all ready to emulate a horseman’s speed. Sandwich, at that period the most celebrated port of England,¹ was the point to which Cnut directed his course, and where a stout resistance seems to have awaited him. Thorkell, anxious to reinstate himself in his master’s favour, was, at his own solicitation, the first to land. With the forces of forty ships he engaged the English army, and though at the outset the Danes sustained a severe loss, victory at last declared itself on their side, and they returned loaded with spoil to their ships. The resistance, however, encountered by the Danes at Sandwich was probably such as to induce Cnut to leave that place and sail round to the mouth of the Frome, where having landed his forces he ravaged the counties of Dorset, Wilts and Somerset. Æthelred during these events lay sick at Corsham.

On the news of this invasion, prince Eadmund immediately assembled an army in the northern parts, while Eadric did the same in the country under his authority. On the junction of the two armies, Eadric, lost to all

¹ Encom. Emmæ, p. 13, “omnium Anglorum portuum famosissimus.”

sense of honour, and wholly abandoned to his own selfish schemes, endeavoured either to betray or compass the death of the ætheling; but the plot being discovered, the armies separated and turned their backs on the enemy. Immediately afterwards Eadric with forty ships, the crews of which, consisting chiefly of Danes in the pay of Æthelred, whom he had seduced, passed into the service of the enemy. The whole of Wessex now submitted to Cnut, delivered hostages, and furnished him with horses for his army, which, however, remained stationary until Christmas.¹

In the following year Cnut, accompanied by Eadric, crossed the Thames at Cricklade, in the north of Wiltshire, into Mercia, and in Warwickshire committed the greatest devastation, burning, plundering and slaying wherever they went. The ætheling Eadmund again assembled an army, which, in consequence of being unable to get the support of the Londoners with the king at their head, was quickly disbanded, each man returning to his home. A decree for the general levy of the country was now issued, by which every able-bodied man who did not appear in arms was subjected to the highest penalty; and the king, yielding to the representations of the persons sent to him by Eadmund, who implored him to join the army with such forces as he could muster, lost no time in showing himself to his warriors: but he had scarcely arrived when, on the report of a plot against him, he hastily dismissed the army, and shut himself up within the walls of London. Eadmund now betook himself to his brother-in-law, eorl Uhtred in Northumbria, for the purpose, as it was supposed, of raising another army against the Danes: they appear, however, to have contented themselves

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1015.

with ravaging the counties of Stafford, Salop and Chester, while Cnut on his part was plundering and devastating, on his march to York, those of Huntingdon, Northampton, Lincoln and Nottingham. On receipt of this intelligence, Uhtred hastened to make his submission to Cnut, as he had formerly done to his father, and gave hostages for his fidelity, notwithstanding which, when attending on the king, he was, by his order, though at the instigation of Eadric, put to death, together with Thurecytel, the son of Nafena, and forty of his followers; Thorbrand, a Danish nobleman, with a band of armed men having been posted close by for the purpose of slaying them.¹ Eadric was shortly after appointed to the vacant earldom of Northumberland. Cnut now with all his fleet steered his course towards London, in the hope of seizing the person of Æthelred; but Eadmund had already arrived there for the defence of his father, and before Cnut could reach the place, Æthelred had died, after a lingering sickness. He expired on St. George's day, and was buried in the cathedral of St. Paul. History contains few reigns so long and so disastrous as that of this unhappy prince; but merited as his misery was, the catholic church has, nevertheless, enrolled him among her martyrs.²

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1016. Sim. Dunelm. de Success, p. 79.

² Sax. Chron., Fl. W., April 23rd, 1016.

CHAPTER XII.

A.D. 1016.

Miserable Condition of England—Eadmund chosen King by the Witan—Treachery of Bishops and Ealdormen—Cnut proclaimed King—Siege of London—Eadmund's indefatigable Efforts against the Danes—Battle of Seceorstan—New Treason of Eadric—Continued Fighting—Victory of Danes at Assingdon—Treaty at Olney—Murder of Eadmund—Character of Eadric—State of Society—Corruption of Officers of the Court.

TORN as England was by the mutual hate and the dissensions of its nobles, and by their treachery towards the king naturally arising therefrom, the hearts of the people were not yet wholly alienated from the old royal race, and the advancing burgher class did not forget to whom it was indebted for its new privileges, no confirmation or extension of which was to be expected from the Danes. Those of the witan assembled at London who had continued faithful to the late king, as well as the citizens, of whose participation express mention is made, chose for king of England, Eadmund, the eldest son of Æthelred, whose valour had gained for him the surname of Ironside; but the far greater part of the clergy and nobles agreed to elect Cnut the Dane for their lord and master. Bishops, abbots, ealdormen and other persons of rank flocked to Southampton, where Cnut was staying, for the purpose of releasing themselves before him, by oath and for ever, from their allegiance to the race of Æthelred, of establishing peace

with him, and swearing allegiance to him; in return for which he swore to be to them a faithful lord, according to the laws of God and man.¹

Eadmund now, accompanied by his brother Æthelstan, left London, where the queen Emma still remained,² and, surrounded by faithful followers, proceeded to Wessex, where he was joyfully received by the people, who submitted to his authority. Their example was followed by the inhabitants of other parts. Cnut had in the meantime arrived before London with his fleet, consisting of three hundred and forty sail, where, finding his operations for the capture of the place impeded by the well-fortified bridge, he caused a vast ditch to be dug on the south bank of the river, through which, having drawn a number of ships above the city, he was enabled to cut off all supplies and succour by water. His next step was to surround the city with a deep trench, thus depriving it of all help on the land-side, as he had previously done on that of the river. The Danes imperiously demanded of queen Emma the delivery of her sons into their hands, a ransom of fifteen

¹ Fl. W. Sim. Dunelm. a. 1016. These particulars are omitted in the Sax. Chron.

² Ditmar, l. c., whose accounts are, however, to be used with caution. According to the Saxon Chronicle, Eadmund left London before the siege, consequently did not escape by night in a boat as Ditmar relates; nor was he attacked and slain by Thurgel (Thorkell). Ditmar's narrative (lib. vii.) terminates in the time between Eadmund's death and the surrender of the city. On the other hand, the *Encomium Emmæ* agrees with Ditmar in stating that London surrendered to Cnut, and also relates that Eadmund fled the night before Cnut's entrance. So also the *Roman de Rou*, v. 6512 sq. At the same time the author of the *Encomium* is not to be regarded as particularly well informed, who represents Eadmund as passing the next winter in London, and fighting in the spring following, though before the beginning of the winter he was dead.

thousand pounds for herself, and twelve thousand pounds for two bishops who were in the city, together with the surrender of all the arms; promising that for the fulfilment of these conditions three hundred hostages should be given. The queen, it is said, after long wavering, agreed to these hard terms, which were not, however, fulfilled,¹ for when the Danes endeavoured to carry the place by storm, they were vigorously repelled by the citizens. Eadmund was in the meanwhile indefatigably engaged in fighting against the enemy. At Pen near Gillingham, in Dorsetshire, he ventured with a small body to attack a Danish army, which he put to flight; and shortly after, having increased his numbers, he resolved on a battle with Cnut himself. The rival monarchs met on St. John's day at Sceorstan,² in the territory of the Hwiccas. Having arranged his forces according to the nature of the ground, placing his choicest warriors in the foremost rank, and posting the others as a reserve, Eadmund exhorted them, with all the eloquence he could command, to fight for their country, their children, their wives and homes. At the

¹ The bishop of Merseburg is the only voucher for these particulars. Snorre, c. xi., probably alludes to the siege; but less doubtfully the Flatoë MS. ap. Torfæus, t. iii. c. 19. The Thord (Thurth) mentioned in the latter, a nephew of Thorkell, appears afterwards in English charters. See Palgrave, ii. p. ccxxvi.

² Supposed by Camden to be Sherston in Wilts, by others to be a boundary stone dividing the counties of Oxford, Gloucester, Worcester and Warwick. May it not be Chimney in Oxfordshire, a hamlet in the parish of Bampton-in-the-Bush, near the edge of Gloucestershire (the Land of the Hwiccas)? the name of Chimney being merely a translation (introduced after the Norman conquest) of Sceorstan (*Dan.* Skorsteen, *Ger.* Schornstein, *chimney*). It may probably have been derived from a Saxon house or hall, conspicuous for having a chimney at a time when that luxury was elsewhere unknown.—T.

outset of the battle they fought hand to hand, Eadmund performing the duties both of a general and a common soldier. But the force opposed to him was not to be subdued, having been joined by the men of Hampshire and Wiltshire under the traitor Eadric, Ælfmær, surnamed Dyrling, and Ælfgar, the son of Meaw.¹ Night and fatigue put an end to the conflict, which was renewed on the following day, when Eadmund, rushing forwards amid the ranks of the enemy, singled out their king, at whom he aimed a blow with his sword, which clove the upraised shield of his adversary, and wounded his horse in the shoulder; but being pressed on by numbers, Eadmund was forced to retire. At this critical moment Eadric, striking off the head of one Osmær, who in features and complexion bore a strong resemblance to king Eadmund, exclaimed, "Ye men of Dorset, Devon and Wilts, now that your chief is slain, fly with all speed; behold the head of your king, which I hold here in my hands." Before, however, the panic became serious, it was made known throughout the army that Eadmund was unhurt, and the contest continued till darkness again separated the combatants. In the dead of the night Cnut broke up his quarters and marched to London, the siege of which he resumed.² The Danes, while they acknowledged the courage of their adversaries, at the same time claimed the honour of victory, which they in great measure ascribe to the zeal and valour of Thorkell, who was naturally desirous of manifesting his fidelity to his master.³ It was probably with the knowledge of, and in concert

¹ Fl. W. Sim. Dunelm. a. 1016.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. W. Malm. a. 1016.

³ Encom. Emmæ, p. 16. Gaimar (v. 4229) also mentions Thorkell's presence in this battle.

with Cnut, that Eadric now returned to the service of his natural sovereign, with whom he effected a reconciliation, and to whom he swore inviolable fidelity.¹

When apprised of the departure of the Danish army, Eadmund returned to Wessex for the purpose of obtaining reinforcements, and immediately marched to London, the siege of which he raised and drove the enemy to their ships. His third encounter with the Danes was at Brentford, where victory, though not decisive, appears to have been on the side of the English. Eadmund now again returned to procure reinforcements in Wessex, while the Danes, profiting by his absence, resumed the siege of London, but without success. From London they proceeded on board their ships, and entering the river Arewe [Orwell], they landed in Mercia, plundering, burning and slaying in every direction. The foot-soldiers now returned to the vessels, and sailed to the Medway, while the cavalry drove the live booty before them across the country. Eadmund having again collected an army, came up with the enemy at Otford in Kent, who being again worsted fled to the Isle of Sheppey. Eadmund, it is said, would on this occasion have easily effected the total destruction of Cnut and his army, had he not listened to the treacherous counsels of Eadric, who by his wiles induced him to desist from the pursuit of the enemy at Aylesford. On the return of Eadmund to Wessex, Cnut passed with his army into the eastern territory, whence he renewed the work of devastation in Mercia more mercilessly than before. At the head of an army drawn together from all parts of England, Eadmund next encountered the Danes at a hill called Assandun (Assington) in Essex. At the first onset the Danes gave

¹ Fl. W.

way, and after a long and bloody conflict victory seemed to incline to the Anglo-Saxons. But the perfidious Eadric, seeing the Danes falling back, concealed his banner and took to flight with the men of Hereford and Worcestershire (Magesætas) and other forces under his command, in fulfilment of the promise which he had made to Cnut.¹ This act of treason decided the fate of England. The conflict was continued till night, and even by moonlight, when the army of Eadmund fled in all directions. The loss in slain on the side of the English was extremely severe, particularly in men of note, among whom are named, the ealdorman Ælfric, Godwine of Lindsey, Ulfkytel of East Anglia, and Æthelweard, son of Æthelwine, surnamed the friend of God, ealdorman of East Anglia. Eadnoth, bishop of Dorchester, and the abbot Wulfsige, who had come to pray for the success of the army, were also slain. On the following morning the Danes hastily buried their own numerous dead, stripped the corpses of their fallen foes, and left them a prey to the beasts and birds.² A few years afterwards Cnut and Thorkell caused a church to be erected at Assingdon, in remembrance of this victory,³ which for the Danes was what half a century later Hastings was for the Normans. This is probably the first instance in England of the recently converted Danes seeking their fame and peace in the erection of a Christian temple. Not content with the glorious

¹ Encom. Emmæ, p. 17. Fl. W.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. Encom. Emmæ, pp. 17, 18. Hist. Rames. c. 72. The death of "Æthelwinus, Dei amicus," is mentioned by Florence under the year 992.

³ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1020. Hist. Eliens. ii. 29. [Malmesbury (ii. 11) informs us that Cnut built churches on all the places of battle, and also restored the monasteries and churches that had been destroyed or desecrated by his father or himself.—T.]

result of this conflict, Cnut followed his adversary into Gloucestershire, where Eadmund was again desirous of hazarding the event of a battle, but was diverted from his purpose by Eadric and others, who counselled him to conclude a peace and divide the kingdom with Cnut. Another account is, that Eadmund, when on the eve of engaging in another battle, for the sake of preventing the further waste of blood, challenged Cnut to decide the contest between them by single combat, which the latter declined, in consequence of his inferiority in point of bodily strength. According to other accounts, they were already engaged in single combat, on the isle of Olney in the Severn, in compliance with the desire of their wearied and wasted armies, when Cnut, finding his strength beginning to fail, proposed a suspension of the contest, which led to a compromise, by which, after having sworn to peace, fraternity and friendship, the kingdom was divided between them; Wessex, East Anglia, Essex, including London, and all the country south of the Thames remaining to Eadmund, while Cnut obtained Mercia and all the northern parts. The sovereignty was preserved to Eadmund. Having now exchanged arms and vestments, and settled the sum that was to be paid to the fleet, even by the states ruled by Eadmund, the two kings separated.¹ After the

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W., who says, "*Corona regni tamen Ead-mundo remansit.*" Ailred of Rievaulx, p. 363, relates the particulars of the single combat, and from him, Matt. West.; and partially Bromton, Knyghton, also H. Hunt. According to Malmesbury and the Encom. Emmæ, Cnut prudently declined the challenge in these terms, "*Tu qui aves duellum in hieme, cave ne deficias aptiori tempore.*" According to Gaimar v. (4255 sq.), when the preparations were made for the combat, Cnut proposed conditions of peace. Joh. Petriburg. ap. Sparke, p. 36, Johannis Chron. in Ladewig, Reliq. MSS., give credit to the story of the battle. [Ac-

battle of Assingdon, London entered into a separate treaty with the jarl Eric, who had commanded the besiegers, according to which a sum of money was paid to the Danes, who were, moreover, allowed to establish their winter-quarters within the walls of the city.¹

The valiant citizens had scarcely had time to rejoice over the conclusion of peace and the return of their king, when, on St. Andrew's day, he perished by the hand of an assaasin,² having survived his father barely six months. Both Eadric and his son were accused of the crime of having murdered their sovereign with a dagger or by poison, or even by a machine placed in a closet frequented by the king, which, when touched, let fly an arrow. That Eadric by this murder believed he was rendering a service to Cnut cannot be doubted; more doubtful is it whether Cnut was privy to the deed, of which at least none of the English writers accuse him, though suspicion is somewhat excited by the gift made by him some years later of a splendid pall, at the tomb of the murdered king at Glastonbury, for the pardon of his own sins, and for the soul of his brother, king Eadmund.²

According to Huntingdon, Cnut had London and the sovereignty: "*Rex Cnut, tanta fretus victoria, Londoniam et sceptrum cepit regalia.*" His testimony is, however, outweighed by that of Florence.—T.

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1016.

³ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. H. Hunt., who says that he was murdered at Oxford. W. Malm. Ailr. Rieval. Adam. Brem. Gaimar, v. 4399 sq. Bromton. Malmesb. de Antiq. Glaston. Matt. Westm. a. 1026. In Olaf Haraldsson's Saga, Eadric is named as the murderer, and in Hist. Eliens. lib. i., see also Hist. Rames. c. 74. In the Knytlinga Saga (p. 199) it is said that Eadric was bribed by Cnut to commit the murder. Saxo speaks of it as a report only.

Eadric the traitor, as well as his predecessor in wiles and dignities, Ælfric, are difficult to comprehend, notwithstanding the familiarity of modern history with numerous traitors of our own days, who have fought under a dozen banners and signed treaties for a dozen governments with the calmness of those who regard a banner only as any indifferent shred of cloth, and all words whatever as the mere vibrations of the air; but who despise as weak and ignorant all who believe in the sanctity of banners or of words. Were Æthelred and Eadmund really so weak as to allow themselves constantly to be blinded by crafty intriguers, and always to receive their worst enemy again into favour? Deception was, without doubt, easier in those times (as it was also newer and rarer), when the commonest mountebank of our days would have passed for a magician. But must not the witan, who were parties to every measure of importance, have been either as weak as their king, or as treacherous as Eadric and his adherents? Or is it not possible that, powerful as was Eadric's personality, vast as his demoniacal influence certainly was, he may, nevertheless, have been made a scapegoat, and that much may have been falsely imputed to him, both by his contemporaries and by posterity, as certain substances attract all kinds of pernicious poisonous vapours? And was he not at the same time, like his predecessors in the ealdormanship of Mercia, in great measure only the organ of that province, where many of the nobles were of Danish origin, and where both the nobles and the commonalty had never proved themselves particularly devoted to the West Saxon royal family?¹ This solution of the

¹ The force of this reasoning is much lessened by the circumstances that Eadric was a South Saxon, not a Mercian.—T.

enigma seems the more reasonable, as Eadric never lost the confidence of his province, which followed him among the Danes as well as among the West Saxons. But even the ealdormen of Wessex had sometimes declared in favour of the Danish Raven. In fact, faith in the posterity of Woden had long been extinguished; with that the higher families had also abandoned themselves, first to sensuality, then to cowardice, and the political importance both of the royal and noble races was violently shaken to its very roots. The state no longer consisted in the joint interests of the sovereignty, the nobility and the church, by which the worthiest of the nation were united, but in certain individuals who pretended to represent them. A set of courtiers connected by blood or marriage, and accidentally brought together by the humour of the king, formed an association which was looked upon as the state, and, with respect to its influence, really was so. We have already become sufficiently acquainted with Anglo-Saxon court history, with the idle vanity and dissoluteness of the princes, the ambition of the prelates, the atrocious murders and base treachery even among the nearest kindred, to pronounce this court as Byzantine as that on the shores of the Bosphorus, and to comprehend the fall of a state-polity based on so corrupt a support.

PART IV.

THE DANISH DYNASTY.



CHAPTER XIII.

A.D. 1016–1024.

Election of Cnut as sole King—Baseness of Courtiers—Exclusion of old Royal Family—Division of Country—Marriage of Cnut with widowed Queen Emma—Murder of Eadric—Danegild—Cnut's able Legislation—His Conduct in regard to Church Matters—War with Wessex—Godwin—Outlawry of Eadwig—Thorkell—Eric—Conduct of Malcolm of Scotland—Ulf-Jarl—Cnut's Conciliatory Mode of Government—Peace and Happiness of England—Cnut's Relations with Foreign Princes.

IMMEDIATELY after the murder of Eadmund, his powerful vassal Cnut, king of northern England, summoned the bishops, ealdormen, thanes and all the chief men of England to a great assembly at London.¹ On their appearance before him, as if distrustful of his own memory, he desired those who were witnesses of what had passed between him and Eadmund, when they agreed to divide the kingdom, to declare what had been said regarding the brothers and sons of the latter; whether in the case of his surviving Eadmund, the

¹ Fl. W. a. 1016. "Omnes episcopos et duces, necnon et principes, cunctosque optimates gentis Angliæ, Londoniæ congregari jussit."

throne should devolve on him or on them? The base and selfish courtiers immediately declared on oath that Eadmund, neither in his lifetime nor when at the point of death, had ever designed any portion of his kingdom for his brothers; but that Cnut, according to the known will of Eadmund, should aid and support his children until they were of age to assume the reins of government. This declaration of the exclusion of the brothers was, at a time when the pretensions of minors to the throne were seldom regarded, all that Cnut required in order to be acknowledged king of all England. With few exceptions, the persons assembled swore to choose him for their king, humbly to obey him, and to pay tribute to his army; and, having received his pledge given with his naked hand, and the oaths of the Danish chiefs, they treated with contempt the brothers and sons of Eadmund, and declared them unworthy ever to ascend the throne.¹ The elito Eadwig, the highly revered brother of Eadmund, was pronounced worthy of banishment; but Cnut, who naturally feared him as a rival above all his brothers, lost no time in deliberating with Eadric as to the readiest means of destroying him. Eadric hereupon introduced to Cnut, as a fitting instrument, a certain nobleman named Æthelweard, to whom a great reward was offered for the head of the prince, but who, while expressing his readiness, had no intention to perpetrate the deed. The prince, therefore, for that time, escaped with life.

After a short interval, in the beginning of the following year the election of Cnut took place at London, whither the vassals from the remotest parts

¹ Fl. W. "omnino despexerunt," whose account of these transactions is the most circumstantial. Cf. Ailr. Rieval.

were summoned. Having entered into the customary engagements with the nobles and people, and exchanged oaths of lasting friendship, and oblivion of all former enmities, he ordained a new division of the kingdom. From the few ealdormen whose names have been transmitted to us, it would seem that, even in the last years of Æthelred, the division of the country into a number of small provinces had been thought disadvantageous; but Cnut went further in the work of reform, by dividing England into four parts only. Of these he reserved Wessex for his own immediate government; Eadric retained Mercia; East Anglia was assigned to Thorkell, who had espoused Eadgyth, the widow of the ealdorman Ulfcytel;¹ Northumbria was bestowed on Eric, the former jarl of Norway. A series of measures was next adopted for the security of Cnut against the members of the legitimate royal family. The ætheling Eadwig, against whom a decree of banishment had already been pronounced by the witan at London, was declared an outlaw; as well as another Eadwig,² probably a relation of the royal house, who for reasons with which we are unacquainted, was called the "king of the churls or peasants" (*ceorla cyning*). The two sons of Eadmund, Eadward and Eadmund, the eldest scarcely two years old, were sent by Cnut to his half-brother Olaf, king of Sweden, who, it seems, would neither take charge of guests who might one day

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1017. Suhm, Bd. iii. s. 471.

² Sax. Chron. aa 1017, 1020, Fl. W., H. Hunt. a. 1017, expressly mention two Eadwigs. In Simeon (p. 177), who in other respects agrees verbally with Florence, the words "*et Eadwium*" appear to have fallen out of the text, whence some late writers have assumed one Eadwig only. It has escaped notice that the ætheling was slain in 1017, while the other lived some years after.

involve him in difficulties, nor, yielding to the wishes and, as it is said, secret request of Cnut, cause them to be murdered. The children were therefore sent to Stephen, king of Hungary,¹ the brother-in-law, by his wife Gisela, of the German king and emperor Henry the Second, who, as well as Stephen, was distinguished by the title of Saint."² To Eadmund, the elder brother, Stephen gave his second daughter in marriage; and on the premature death of her husband without issue, she after a time gave her hand to Count Eppo of Nellenburg, by whom she was the mother of St. Eberhard.³ The younger prince married Agatha, a relation of the German imperial house,⁴ by whom he had three children, and of these mention will be made hereafter.

¹ Florence calls him "Salomon," but from a. 997 to 1038 king Stephen reigned in Hungary. Adam. Brem. (lib. i.) says, "Filii (Eadmundi) in Ruzziam exilio sunt damnati." Cf. Suhm, Bd. iii. s. 533, and Karamsin, History of Russia, ii. 32.

² This relationship, which is important as throwing light on Cnut's later policy, has been unnoticed by English historians.

³ Ailr. Rieval. "Eadmundo filiam suam (sc. rex Hungariorum) dedit uxorem." Gaimar (v. 4506) and, from him, Bromton call the Dane who accompanied the young prince "Walgar." Johannis Chron. ap. Ludewig. With regard to the second marriage of Eadmund's widow, see Acta SS. 10 Jun. t. iii. and April. t. i.

⁴ Sax. Chron. aa. 1057, 1067. "pæs caseres mage." Fl. W. a. 1017, "filiam germani imperatoris Henrici in matrimonium accepit." Ailr. Rieval. "filia germani sui (r. sancti) Henrici imperatoris." "Germanus" is by the later chroniclers often misunderstood for *German*. W. Malm. ii. 10. "reginæ (Hungariæ) sororem." Suhm (Bd. iii. s. 726) takes Agatha for the daughter of Bruno, afterwards bishop of Augsburg (ob. 1029), who was a brother of the emperor Henry II. and of queen Gisela. Respecting Bruno, cf. Orig. Guelfic. t. iv. That by "imperator Henricus," the second, and not the third of that name is meant, appears from later events.

Cnut had now removed his most dangerous enemies from England. Olaf of Norway (if the poetic sagas of Snorre have any historic foundations),¹ who, after the death of Eadmund, afforded succour to his brothers, had been beaten back, and over the rest of the North the power of Cnut was supreme, either directly or through his relations. The chief danger threatened him from Normandy, where Ælfgifu Emma, the widow of Æthelred, and her two sons were residing with her brother Richard the Second, surnamed the Good. After so many deeds of violence, we are naturally surprised at the policy of the Northern conqueror, which prompted him to offer his hand to the widow of the Anglo-Saxon king, and, without consideration for his and her elder children, to promise the succession to those they might have in common.² By the end of July this marriage was completed, one consequence of which appears to have been, besides a closer alliance with duke Richard, the adoption of some milder measures, as we find that Eadwig, "the king of the churls," made his peace with the king. But Cnut could not consider himself secure while surrounded by so many powerful Anglo-Saxons, and in the same year he caused Eadwig the ætheling to be murdered.³ Eadric of Mercia also,

¹ C. xxv. sq. With this perhaps is connected the account of thirty pirate ships said to have been overcome by Cnut on the coast of England. Ditmar, lib. viii.

² Fl. W. Encom. Emmæ, p. 20 sq. Rad. Glaber, ap. Bouquet, x. 14.

³ Fl. W. a. 1017, "Verum sequenti tempore cum rege pacificatus est Eadwius: *Eadwius* vero *clito*, deceptus illo um insidiis quos eotenus amicissimos habuit, jussu et petitione regis Canuti, eodem anno innocenter occiditur." Malmesbury, however (ii. 10), speaks of his having died of sorrow: "Frater ejus ex matre Edwius, non aspernandæ probitatis adolescens, per prolitorem Edricum

who had so greatly facilitated his attainment of the throne of England, but was an object of hatred both to the Danes and Saxons, met with the fate he so richly merited. During the Christmas festival an altercation arose between Cnut and Eadric, when the latter, with the view apparently of obtaining some further rewards, exclaimed, "It was for you that I deserted Eadmund, and from fidelity to you I afterwards destroyed him." "Then you deserve death," answered the irritated monarch, "for treason against God and against me; for having slain your rightful sovereign and my sworn brother." Hereupon he summoned to his presence the jarl Eric, who was at hand, and who, on a word from his master, raised his battle-axe and felled the traitor to the earth. His body being cast over the city wall was there left unburied.¹ At the same time, on mere suspicion, he caused to be slain Northman, the son of Leofwine the ealdorman, one of the chief of Eadric's adherents: Æthelweard, the son of Æthelmær the Great, and Brihtric, the son of Ælfheah. Northman's possessions were inherited by his brother Leofric, who long enjoyed the favour of Cnut.² One motive for the destruction of so many Anglo-Saxons may have been the necessity of rewarding the Danish warriors with lands, and thereby fixing them in England.³ On the other hand, all those Anglo-Saxons who, by treason or weakness, had contributed to the overthrow of the old dynasty were with great rigour banished by Cnut from his presence, and

Anglia, jubente Cnutone, cessit: diu terris jactatus et alto, *angore animi* ut fit corpus infectus, dum furtivo reditu apud Anglos delitescit, defungitur, et apud Tavistokium tumulatur."—T.

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1017. W. Malm. ii. 10, who says his carcase was thrown out of the window into the Thames.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W.

³ Hist. Rames. c. 84. *init.*

even from the kingdom, as useless and dangerous. A heavy Danegild of seventy-two thousand pounds which was imposed on the English, besides ten thousand five hundred pounds, to be paid by the citizens of London alone, closed the hostile measures of the new sovereign against England, where during the whole remaining part of his reign we meet only with one trace of disturbance caused by the natives. After the above-mentioned oppressive tax was paid, Cnut sent his fleet of about fifty ships back to Denmark.

A remarkable change in the government of Cnut is at this time observable: we perceive in him, if not a ruler to be compared with Charles the Great, yet a conqueror who was not hated, and under whom the people were probably happier than they had latterly been under their native sovereigns. The stern warrior appears from this time as a provident and wise ruler, capable of valuing and promoting and profiting by all the blessings of peace. The legal state of the country was settled in a great witenagemot at Oxford, and the legislation as it had been in the days of king Eadgar adopted as the model.¹ The laws of Eadgar had shown particular regard to the Danes dwelling in England, while in those of Æthelred, as far as we are acquainted with them, similar provisions do not appear; they may even have contained enactments by which the customary laws of that nation were infringed. Cnut, moreover, devoted the greatest attention to the administration of the laws, and in pursuance of this object frequently journeyed through his English states from one boundary to another,² attended by his counsellors and scribes. As a result of these judicial

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1018.

² Hist. Rames. c. 85. "Cum rex Cnutus more assueto regni fines peragraret."

labours may be regarded the numerous laws enacted by Cnut for the Anglo-Saxons, both ecclesiastical and secular, among the latter of which may be reckoned his collection of provisions relative to the royal forests and the chase. In these it is particularly striking with what care their distinctive rights are preserved to the Anglo-Saxons and their several provinces, as well as to the Danes, to whom no legal favour appears to have been shown, and how everything seems to have been done to satisfy the pretensions of the clergy. According to the custom of that age, in which year of Cnut's reign these laws were published at Winchester, it is not specified; and few, if any, attempts have since been made to ascertain it. They do not, however, appear to have been composed in the first years of his reign, and are, therefore, not to be confounded with the before-mentioned confirmation of Eadgar's laws, as may be inferred from their preamble, which shows them to be posterior to the reconquest of Norway in 1028, as well as from the reintroduction of St. Peter's penny.¹

With greater probability we may reckon among the earlier labours of Cnut the composition of the "Witherlags Ret," a court- or gild-law, framed for his standing army, as well as for the body-guards of his jarls. As the greater part of his army remained in England, the Witherlags Ret was first established there,² and as the introduction of strict discipline among such a military community must precede all other ameliorations in the condition of the country, the mention of this law ought not to be omitted in its history.

¹ Wilkins places the Council of Winchester in 1021, with whom Suhm (Bd. iii. s. 556) coincides.

² Suen. Aggon. Hist. Legum Castrens. Regis Canuti Magni, c. iv. ap. Langebek, t. iii. p. 146.

The immediate military attendants of a conqueror always exercise vast influence, and these originally Danish soldiers (*thingamenn*, *thingamanna-lith*, by the English called *hus-carlas*¹) have at a later period, both as body-guards of the king and of the great vassals, acted no unimportant part in the country. They were armed with axes, halberds and swords inlaid with gold, and in purpose, descent and equipment corresponded to the Warangian guard (*Waräger*), in which the throne of the Byzantine emperors found its best security. In Cnut's time the number of these mercenaries was not very great—being by some reckoned at three thousand, by others at six thousand—but they were gathered under his banner from various nations, and consequently required the stricter discipline. Even a valiant Wendish prince, Gottschalk, the son of Udo, stayed long with Cnut in England, and gained the hand of a daughter of the royal house.² Cnut himself appears rather as a sort of grand-master of this military gild than as its commander, and it is said that, having in his anger slain one of the brotherhood in England, he submitted himself to its judgment in their assembly (*stefn*) and paid a ninefold compensation.³ The degrading epithet of “*nithing*,” applied to an expelled member of the gild, is an Anglo-Saxon word, which at a later period occurs in a way to render it extremely probable that the gild-law of the royal house-carls was in existence after the Norman conquest.⁴

With the same prudence and the same success with

¹ Cf. Langebek, Bd. ii. s. 454, *note* ^d. Palgrave, ii. p. cccclxxxi. “*Huscarli*” are frequently mentioned in Domesday. See Ellis's Introduction, i. p. 91, ii. p. 151 sq.

² Adam. Brem. ii. 48, 59, iii. 21. ³ Suen. Aggon. lib. i. c. 10.

⁴ Sax. Chron. a. 1049. W. Malm. lib. iv. de Willelmo Secundo, a. 1088.

which Cnut provided for the interests of the other classes, he protected also those of the clergy. Heathenism, which had held possession of many a lurking-place in the popular belief of the Anglo-Saxons, and had again found entrance with the newly settled Danes, was strictly prohibited. Ecclesiastics were honoured by him, many churches rebuilt, every monastery in England richly gifted,¹ and some also in foreign countries, among which those of St. Omer's² and Chartres,³ were gladly surprised by costly presents: by similar means the chapter at Bremen was induced to pray for him, under the Christian name of Lambert, for queen Emma and for his son Harthacnut; while Cologne also received from him splendid psalters and choral books.⁴ He instituted the anniversaries of the sainted king Eadward and of St. Dunstan; and the remains of archbishop Ælfheah, who had been so barbarously murdered by his countrymen, he caused to be conveyed with the greatest pomp to Canterbury. In honour of St. Eadmund, the king and martyr, he caused the Benedictine monastery to be founded, or rather refounded at Bedericsworth, since called St. Edmundsbury, an undertaking through which as well as by many of the measures above-related, he

¹ Hist. Rames. c. lxxx. sq.

² Encom. Emmæ, p. 24.

³ W. Malm. ii. 11. Fulberti Carnot. Epist. xcvi., wherein the bishop renders thanks for his present "*regi Danomarchiæ Cnuto, homini longo a nobis terræ marisque intervallo diviso, quem paganorum principem audieramus.*" The letter contains no trace of Cnut's presence at Chartres, as Suhm supposes, for the sake of connecting it with the pilgrimage to Rome: it appears rather to have been written in the earlier portion of Cnut's reign, as Fulbert knows nothing of his works for Christianity.

⁴ These came back to England in the year 1055, as presents to Aldred, bishop of Worcester. See W. Malm. Vita Wulstani, ap. Wharton, A. S. t. ii. Adam. Brem. lib. ii. c. 37, schol.

might feel sure of gaining the good-will of the Anglo-Saxons. The re-establishment of St. Peter's penny was a step which greatly raised him in the estimation of the higher clergy, and without injuring him in the eyes of the people, who no longer regarded as a foreign foe a king who from choice lived in the midst of them, protected their rights, honoured their saints, and cultivated their language, in which he is believed to have composed some verses that have come down to us. Even Danish bishoprics he conferred on English ecclesiastics, among which may be named Scania (Skaane) on Bernhard, Fionia (Fyen) on Reinhere, Seeland or Roeskilde on Gerbrand: a proceeding the less extraordinary, as St. Olaf, king of Norway, and Olaf of Sweden had also invited from England many excellent priests for the conversion of their subjects,¹ as Sigefrith, Sigeward, and his brother's son Grimkil, Rodulf, Bernhard and Wulfrith. The consecration of these bishops was performed by Æthelnoth, archbishop of Canterbury, who, consequently, strove to obtain for the English church the supremacy over that of the North, which, not on account of its high antiquity, but through papal investitures and multifarious services to Christianity in those parts, was at that time enjoyed by the church of Hamburg,² over which the archbishop Unwan, of the illustrious race of the Immedingen, had

¹ Adam of Brem. ii. 38, 40, 44, and c. 241. Theod. de Reg. Norw., c. 8-20.

² It may here be noticed that Germans rarely occur among the ecclesiastics of England: as an exception, however, I observe an abbot of Ramsey, afterwards an anchorite, who bore the name celebrated in Flanders and Saxony of Wichmann, and at the time when the race of the German counts of that name became extinct. Hist. Rames. c. lxxv. "Qui cum esset bonæ vitæ et prudentiæ laudabilis, genuina tam animi feritate, utpote *Teutonicus* natione," etc.

for some years presided. This prelate, richly endowed with worldly goods and powerful through the favour of the emperor, was influential through the devotion of the Benedictines, whose rule he was the first to introduce into his diocese, and venerable for the zeal with which he employed all the wealth and advantages bestowed on him in the extirpation of heathenism, and in causing the praise of Christ to be celebrated by German, Wendish and Scandinavian tongues. This prince of the church had proved his power not less in secular contests than in triumphant missions, and hesitated not to capture and hold in durance bishop Gerbrand, on his return, from England after his consecration, until he had promised due obedience to the metropolitan of Hamburg. Gerbrand entered so warmly into the views of Unwan with regard to his church, that that prelate sent him back with letters to Cnut, accompanied by presents, for the purpose both of chastising him by reproof, and of felicitating him on the prosperity of his government. Great as the object of this mission was—to establish reconciliation and friendship between the two most potent individuals of the north of Europe—ready compliance with it was not difficult to the politic Cnut, who never suffered his glance into futurity—which in this case promised many advantages from a connection with the powerful primate—to be obscured by any kingly prejudices.¹

¹ Adam of Brem. lib. ii. c. 33 sq. From which—as this writer generally follows the chronological order of events—the period of the above occurrences is made apparent, is, moreover, confirmed by the circumstance that Æthelnoth was raised to the archiepiscopal dignity in 1020. A still exacter determination is afforded by the charter of Cnut to the abbey of Ely, of the 30th June, 1022, which mentions among those present “Gerbrandum, Roscylde parrochie (de) Danorum gente.”

Although the greater number of the undertakings above mentioned could not have been effected in the beginning of his reign, Cnut, nevertheless, had almost from the first acted in a congenial spirit, and saw the fruits of this policy so far ripened, that in the year 1019 he ventured with nine ships to return to Denmark. From that country, we are informed, he undertook a campaign against the Wends, which is interesting to England on account of Godwine, the son of Wulfnoth,¹ so conspicuous at a later period, having, it is said, without the king's knowledge on the night preceding the day fixed on for a battle, attacked and put the enemy to flight, and thereby caused the greatest joy to the king, by whom he was raised to the rank of earl.² The absence of Cnut seems, however, not to have been unattended with some danger in England, which called him back in the following spring, when at a witenagemot at Cirencester, Eadwig, the king of the peasants, and the ealdorman Æthelweard, were declared outlaws.³ The Danish king was now content to remove his adversaries

¹ [The Knytlinga Saga (p. 191) contains a tale, that Ulf, when pursuing the fugitive English, lost his way in a wood, where he met with a shepherd's boy, named Guðini (Godwine), who undertook to guide him back to his own people, and who took him for rest and refreshment to the dwelling of his parents. On his departure the father, Ulfnaðr (Wulfnoth), and mother committed their son to the care of Ulf, who treated him as his son, and in due season gave him his sister Gytha in marriage.—T.]

² H. of Huntingdon (a. 1019) is the oldest authority for this account, and is copied by Rad. de Diceto, Bromton, Knyghton, etc. Matt. Westm. (a. 1024) connects this anecdote of Godwine with a later expedition; but a war between Cnut and the Wends is not improbable, and Godwine appears as 'Dux' in charters of 1021-1023, in Suhm, Bd. iii. s. 799, and as 'comes,' ap. Gale, i. p. 523.

³ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1020. The latter mentions only Æthelweard.

from the country, he no longer needed Eadric's dagger against the Anglo-Saxons, and in his later years could venture to intrust most of the great provincial governments to the hands of the natives, and chiefly to members of the older families. Greater danger appears to have threatened him from some of his Danish friends and nobles, among whom the strict discipline recently introduced, the transformation of the camp into a court of justice, the equality of footing established between the two nations, and the imagined preference manifested for the English, might have excited the most serious displeasure. An intimate connection existing by marriage between the great of both countries, of which Cnut himself had given the example, could not indeed be speedily formed, yet had, in some cases, attached the Danes too strongly to English interests; as in the instance of Thorkell, the most powerful of Cnut's jarls, who, with his Anglo-Saxon wife Eadgyth, was banished from England.¹ After the expiration of a year, the exile was reconciled with his sovereign, who committed to him the government of Denmark and the care of his son.² He, however, brought the son of Thorkell with him, as a hostage, to England. Shortly after, the jarl Eric was also banished from the kingdom, the province, Northumbria, having, under his supremacy, continued in the hands of Eadulf Cudel, a brother of Uhtred, a slothful and pusillanimous man. The king of Scotland, Malcolm the Second, son of Kenneth, availed himself of the confusion naturally resulting

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1021.

² Sax. Chron. aa. 1021, 1023. Fl. W. a. 1021. While Malmesbury, Matt. of Westminster (a. 1021) and Wendover, i. p. 465, relate that, on his landing in Denmark, he was there slain by the jarls.

from the change that had taken place in England, and of the weakness of his neighbours, to extend his power into the provinces of Lothian, which his father had received from king Eadgar, and committed it to the prince Owen (Eugenius) the Bald.¹ This loss seems not, however, to have prejudiced Eric in the king's estimation, as we meet with him some years afterwards at the royal court. The cause of his banishment is not recorded, and all we know further of him is, that shortly after, when on the eve of a pilgrimage to Rome, he died from the rupture of a blood-vessel.²

Among the followers of Cnut, the jarl Ulf, son of Thorgils Sprakalegg, a son of Styrbjörn, was particularly distinguished. Ulf jarl was married to Astrith (Estrith), the sister of Cnut, and by her was ancestor of the succeeding kings of Denmark.³ Gytha, the sister of his brother-in-law Ulf, was by Cnut bestowed in marriage on earl Godwine,⁴ whose daughter we shall ere long see on the throne of England. To this con-

¹ A.D. 1018. Sim. Dunelm. Chron. Mailr. The former (a. 1018) instead of Eadulf speaks of his brother; but more correctly at p. 81.

² H Hunt. a. 1018. "Hyrc fugere compulit." W. Malm. ii. 11, copied by Matt. Westm. a. 1021; yet we find "Yric dux" in charters, 1st June, 1021, ap. Gale, i. p. 523, in one nearly contemporary in Suhm, iii. p. 799, and Palgrave, ii. p. cccxvi. According to Snorre, l. c. c. xxiii., Eric must have been dead in 1018. Cf. also Theod. de Reg. Norw. c. xiv.

³ Adam of Brem. ii. 48. Snorre, l. c. c. 144. Sax. Gramm. i. p. 516. Florence also (a. 1049) speaks of Ulf's father and grandfather, "Spræclingus" and "Ursus." Ulf jarl's name appears also in a charter ap. Palgrave, l. c.

⁴ Adam of Brem. ii. 37. Schol. ad lib. iii. c. 14. Florence (a. 1067) erroneously calls her the sister of the Danish king Svein or Svend (Estridsen), whose father's sister she was. Even Langebek (t. iii. s. 256) has here been led astray.

ciliatory system the kingdom was indebted for some years of comparative happiness and tranquillity, during which it gradually emerged from its long state of adversity. In the land where Cnut once sat like a basilisk in the parched deserts of Libya, the forsaken fields were cultivated anew, fortresses, bridges and roads restored, churches and chapels erected. Neither against the king nor his officials has one complaint on the part of the Anglo-Saxons reached us; and his predilection for England as a residence proves that he duly appreciated both the physical position and the political relations of the country.

But the attention of Cnut was, nevertheless, indefatigably directed to all parts of his dominions, which he strengthened and extended on every side. Through the mediation of his friend archbishop Unwan, who had invited him to Hamburg, he concluded a peace with the new emperor, Conrad the Second, by which the latter ceded to him the city of Sleswig with its territory, when the Eider was fixed as the boundary of the German empire.¹ Cnut's young daughter Gunhild was married to Henry, the son of Conrad, who afterwards became emperor, a brilliant alliance, which, when we consider the power of both princes, finds but a faint prototype in the marriage of Æthelstan's sister with the emperor Otto the Great.

¹ Adam of Brem. ii. c. 38, who places this treaty immediately after Conrad's accession in 1024, and separates it from the other relations between the two princes. For the illustration of this treaty, see Falck, Schleswig-Holstein Rechtsgesch. Bd. ii. s. 15.

CHAPTER XIV.

A.D. 1024-1035.

Continuation of Reign of Cnut—Ulf Jarl's Conduct—Condition of Scandinavian Lands—Murder of Ulf—Cnut's Retribution—Pilgrimage to Rome—His Memorable Letter—Cnut's Conduct in regard to Norway—His Relations with Normandy—Subjugation of Scotland and Cambria—Macbeth—Death of Cnut—His Character—Family.

THE contests in which Cnut, tempted by uncontrollable ambition, was constantly engaged with the Scandinavian kingdoms, called him occasionally from England. Even Ulf jarl, misled by the queen Emma, had made an attempt to get Harthacnut, the young son of Cnut and Emma, who, as we have seen, had been placed under his charge, proclaimed king of Denmark; a misdeed which the king, actuated probably by his designs on Sweden and Norway, apparently forgave.¹ In the year 1025 he embarked on the Baltic with an armament against Olaf, king of Norway, and Anund Jacob, or James, king of Sweden, who had taken up arms against him, and on the river Helga, at the foot of the mountain Stanga, fought an unfortunate battle²

¹ Snorre, l. c. c. clviii.

² Sax. Chron. a. 1025, though only in two MSS. (Bodl. Laud. and Cott. Domit. A. viii.), but which the translators of the Chronicle have not understood, whereby both Saxo (p. 518) and Snorre (l. c.) receive a remarkable confirmation, extending even to the name of the river. Snorre, c. 95, who gives Ulf's descent as above, takes him for the brother-in-law of Cnut: Eylaf he either does not mention, or confounds him with Olaf. Cf. Huntingdon, Bromton,

against Ulf and Eylaf, sons of Rognvald, jarl of West Gothland, and of Ingeborg, a daughter of king Olaf Tryggvason, in which Ulf jarl by his valour saved the life of his royal brother-in-law, and prevented a total defeat. On this occasion many English as well as Danes are said to have perished. Cnut now returned to Seeland, and having stationed his fleet in the Sound, proceeded in angry mood, accompanied by Ulf jarl, to Roskilde. Sitting at chess on Christmas eve, with his brother-in-law, after an entertainment given by the latter to cheer the spirits of his royal relative, Cnut, in consequence of an oversight, lost a knight to his antagonist. The king refused to acknowledge the loss, when the jarl starting up to leave the apartment, overthrew the board, and on his reaching the door, the king exclaimed, "Dost thou run, cowardly Ulf?" To which the other answered, "You would fain have run further at the river Helga, when I came to your help against the Swedes who were cudgeling you like dogs." On the following morning Cnut said to one of his attendants, "Go, and stab Ulf dead." The man returned with the intelligence that the jarl had fled to the church of St. Lucius (formerly of the Holy Trinity); whereupon Cnut said to a Norwegian named Ivar Hvida, a nephew of Eric jarl, "Go, stab the jarl dead." Ivar went, found Ulf in the choir, and with his sword pierced him with a mortal wound. To his

Snorre, l. c. c. 139 sq. *Annal Isl.* a. 1027, ap. *Langebek*, t. iii., may also hence be corrected. There was also a jarl Ulf in the service of Cnut in his earlier years, who ravaged Dimetia and destroyed Menevia (St. David's), but after Cnut's death fled to Germany. See *Annal. Camb.* a. 1022. *Brut y Tyw.* aa. 1020, 1036. This is probably the individual on whom *Suhm* assigns the earldom of Gloucester.

widowed sister Cnut paid a blood-fine of two provinces, which she subsequently bestowed on the church of Roskilde.¹

The details of Cnut's wars with the Swedes and Norwegians, as well as with the Fins, and his negotiations with the princes of those countries, belong not to Anglo-Saxon history, even if the accounts which have reached us of those transactions have any claim to historic notice, and do not, for the greater part, belong to the romantic province of the scalds. From these accounts we must, however, set forth what concerns the Anglo-Saxons themselves, and what their chroniclers deemed worthy to be recorded. Of such notices we unfortunately possess but few that can give to the formless sagas of the North the confirmation necessary to justify their application to the purposes of history.

A period of tranquillity now arrived, in which Cnut was enabled to execute without apprehension the wish which he had long cherished and often deferred, of making a pilgrimage to Rome.² In the latter half of

¹ Ulf was murdered, according to Snorre, on the eve of St. Michael, 1025. Snorre, t. ii. p. 276, Saxo Gram. i. p. 524, and Dahlmann, *Gesch. v. Dänem.* Bd. i. p. 111, from whose circumstantial narrative of Ulf's murder I have chiefly derived the account given in the text.—T.

² A.D. 1026. Great uncertainty exists as to the year of Cnut's journey. The Saxon Chronicle and all the English authorities assign it to the year 1031, among whom as an exception Rad. de Diceto may be noticed, who speaks of the event under 1027 and 1031. Adam of Bremen also speaks of Cnut's journey under archbishop Libentius, 1029–1033. On the other hand, a contemporary, who must have seen Cnut at Rome, Wippo, private secretary to the emperor Conrad, relates that Cnut and Rudolf were present at Conrad's coronation (*Vita Chunradi Salici*, ap. Pistoriam). Cnut himself writes in his epistle that he had spoken with the emperor Conrad and king Rudolf at the Easter festival at Rome. The right year is also given in the *Chron. Turon.*, perhaps from the

the year 1026 he left Denmark, whence he appears to have proceeded to Flanders, where, at St. Omer's, he was seen and his penitence admired by the encomiast of queen Emma.¹ We also meet with him at Namur, where he trusted himself to count Albert only against hostages, although he afterwards entered on terms of friendship with him. During his whole progress he gave noble proofs of his munificence. Hence, passing through France and Burgundy, he reached the holy city, where, besides other immunities, he obtained from pope John the Nineteenth the exemption of the Saxon or English school from all taxes and tolls. After having visited all the churches and chapels in middle Italy, he passed his Easter at Rome, in order to be present at the coronation of his friend and ally the emperor Conrad the Second. It is probable that the marriage of their respective children was here settled. Of the other benefits acquired for his people by this journey an ample account is given in the following letter, which he sent to England, while on his return to Denmark, by the hands of Living, abbot of Tavistock, and afterwards bishop of Crediton, and which we give entire as a picture of the age, and, perhaps, as a proof of an amended life as well as of regal magnificence.²

memorandum of some monk who had seen the king in that monastery when on his journey (Bouquet, t. x. p. 284). Cf. also *Encom. Emmæ*, Wil. Godet, ap. Bouquet, t. x. p. 262. It may be imagined that the earliest English chroniclers have been misled by an x erroneously written for a v in the date 1026. The title assumed by Cnut in his letter, of "rex Norveganorum et partis Suevorum," may be a later interpolation.

¹ *Encom. Emmæ*, p. 24. "dicam quod oculis meis me vidisse recordor."—T.

² Fl. W. a. 1031. W. Malm. ii. 11. I have inserted into the text a close translation of this most interesting monument.—T. :

“Cnut, king of all England and Denmark, and of part of Sweden, to Æthelnoth the metropolitan, and Ælfrie of York, and to all bishops and primates, and to the whole nation of the English, both noble and ignoble, wishes health. I make known to you that I have lately been to Rome, to pray for the redemption of my sins, and for the prosperity of the kingdoms and peoples subject to my rule. This journey I had long ago vowed to God, though, through affairs of state and other impediments, I had hitherto been unable to perform it; but I now humbly return thanks to God Almighty for having in my life granted me to yearn after the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul, and every sacred place within and without the city of Rome, which I could hear of, and, according to my desire, personally venerate and adore. And this I have done chiefly because I had learned from wise men, that the holy apostle Peter had received from the Lord the great power of binding and loosening, and was key-bearer of the celestial kingdom; and I, therefore, deemed it extremely useful to seek his favour before God.

“Be it now known to you, that there was at the Easter celebration a great assembly of nobles, with the lord pope John and the emperor Conrad, to wit, all the princes of the nations from Mount Gargano to the nearest sea, who all received me with consideration, and honoured me with magnificent presents. But I have been chiefly honoured by the emperor with divers costly gifts, as well in golden and silver vases as in mantles and vestments exceedingly precious. I have therefore spoken with the emperor, and the lord pope, and the princes who were there, concerning the wants of all my people, both English and Danes, that a more equitable

law and greater security might be granted to them in their journey to Rome, and that they might not be hindered by so many barriers, nor harassed by unjust tolls: and the emperor and king Rudolf, who has the greater number of those barriers in his dominion, have agreed to my demands: and all the princes have engaged by their edict, that my men, whether merchants, or other travellers for objects of devotion, should go and return in security and peace, without any constraint of barriers or tolls.

“I then complained to the lord pope, and said, that it greatly displeased me, that from my archbishops such immense sums of money were exacted, when, according to usage, they visited the apostolic see to receive the pall; and it was decreed that such exactions should not thenceforth be made. And all that I have demanded for the benefit of my people from the lord pope, from the emperor, from king Rudolf and from the other princes, through whose territories our way lies to Rome, they have freely granted, and also confirmed their cessions by oath, with the witness of four archbishops and twenty bishops, and an innumerable multitude of dukes and nobles, who were present; I therefore render great thanks to God Almighty that I have successfully accomplished all that I desired, as I had proposed in my mind, and satisfied to the utmost the wishes of my people. Now then, be it known to you, that I have vowed, as a suppliant, from henceforth to justify in all things my whole life to God, and to rule the kingdoms and peoples subjected to me justly and piously, to maintain equal justice among all; and if, through the intemperance of my youth, or through negligence, I have done aught hitherto contrary to what is just, I intend with the aid

of God to amend all. I therefore conjure and enjoin my counsellors, to whom I have intrusted the counsels of the kingdom, that from henceforth they in no wise, neither through fear of me nor favour to any powerful person, consent to, or suffer to increase any injustice in my whole kingdom: I enjoin also all sheriffs and reeves ('gerefan') of my entire kingdom, as they would enjoy my friendship or their own security, that they use no unjust violence to any man, either rich or poor, but that every one, both noble and ignoble, enjoy just law, from which let them in no way swerve, neither for equal favour, nor for any powerful person, nor for the sake of collecting money for me, for I have no need that money should be collected for me by iniquitous exactions.

"I therefore wish it to be made known to you that, returning by the same way that I departed, I am going to Denmark, for the purpose of settling, with the counsel of all the Danes, firm and lasting peace with those nations, which, had it been in their power, would have deprived us of our life and kingdoms; but were unable, God having deprived them of strength, who in his loving-kindness preserves us in our kingdoms and honour, and renders naught the power of our enemies. Having made peace with the nations around us, and regulated and tranquillized all our kingdom here in the East, so that on no side we may have to fear war or enmities, I propose this summer, as soon as I can have a number of ships ready, to proceed to England; but I have sent this letter beforehand, that all the people of my kingdom may rejoice at my prosperity; for, as you yourselves know, I have never shrunk from labouring, nor will I shrink therefrom, for the necessary benefit of all my people. I therefore conjure

all my bishops and ealdormen, by the fealty which they owe to me and to God, so to order that before I come to England, the debts of all, which we owe according to the old law, be paid; to wit, plough alms, and a tithe of animals brought forth during the year, and the pence which ye owe to St. Peter at Rome, both from the cities and villages; and, in the middle of August, a tithe of fruits, and at the feast of St. Martin, the first-fruits of things sown, to the church of the parish in which each one dwells, which is in English called *kirk-scot* (*ciric-sceat*). If, when I come, these and others are not paid, he who is in fault shall be punished by the royal power severely and without any remission. Farewell."

What Cnut had in the North-east been unable to effect by arms, he endeavoured to accomplish by bribes. On his return to England, he sent gold, silver and other costly presents to the jarls of Norway, who, as well as a large proportion of the people, detested Olaf, the former because he chastised the immoral conduct of themselves and their wives, the latter on account of his ruthless persecution of heathenism.¹ The rights which Hakon, the son of his brother-in-law Eric, sought to establish, who had before been expelled by him from his part of Norway, afforded a pretext to Cnut to renew his claim to Norway in the name of the son, to whom he had given the earldom of Worcester,² and had promised the hand of his niece Gunhild.³

¹ Cf. Fl. W. a. 1020, with Snorre, cc. 139, 195, Theod. de Reg. Norweg. c. 16.

² Palgrave, ii. p. cclxxxix.

³ Her father is by Florence (a. 1029) called "Wyrtegeorn, rex Winidorum," which later chroniclers have turned into Vortigern, as the early Saxon chronicler had already, *vice versâ*, rendered the latter by Wyrtegeorn.

Together with Hakon, many other Norwegians of distinction (among others, Oslac and Skialg, sons of Erling, are mentioned by name) received benefices in England.¹

In the year 1028 Cnut caused a fleet of fifty ships to be manned, with which, and a strong reinforcement of Danish vessels, he sailed to Norway, where he soon succeeded in expelling Olaf, who possessed virtues which would have adorned him in peace among a civilized people, rather than those of a general and ruler over a rugged disorderly multitude. Cnut caused himself to be chosen sovereign king of Norway by the chiefs and clergy assembled at Nidaros (Trondhjem),² and returned to England with the hostages which had been delivered to him by the Norwegians, after having appointed Hakon jarl his vicegerent in that kingdom. Hakon also embarked for England, to arrange the preparations for his marriage, but perished on his return, most probably by shipwreck, though some accounts state that he was slain in the Orkneys.³ Olaf now resolved to take advantage of the confusion caused by this event, and made an attempt to recover his kingdom, but fell in a battle against his rebellious vassals at Stiklestad on the gulf of Trondhjem. His memory was long preserved in the North, where the crime of his subjects was soon acknowledged as such, and the anniversary of his death was solemnized by the church as that of a martyr for his faith.⁴

¹ Snorre, c. 140, "Oslacus miles." See charter of Cnut in Palgrave, ii. p. ccxc, where "Hacon dux" also appears.

² Snorre, c. 180.

³ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1030. Theod. lib. i. Snorre, c. 195.

⁴ Sax. Chron. a. 1030. [July 29 or Aug. 31. See Dahlmann, Gesch. v. Dannem. Bd. i. s. 112, *note*.—T.]

Norway was now bestowed by Cnut on his natural son Svend.

While Cnut was thus heaping crowns on his head, the rightful heirs to the English throne, the sons of Æthelred and Emma, had arrived at the age of manhood. Their uncle Richard the Second, of Normandy, had afforded them a safe asylum in his court at Rouen, though, from favour to the son of Emma by his second brother-in-law, he never supported their pretensions to England. Richard died after a reign of thirty years,¹ and was succeeded by a son of the same name, who died after a very short reign, when the succession devolved on his younger brother, Robert the Second, distinguished among his contemporaries by the epithet of "the Munificent" and also by that of "the Devil," but better known to posterity as the father of William the Conqueror. It was probably to duke Robert that Cnut, with the view of allaying by such an alliance the storm that seemed to threaten him from that quarter, betrothed his sister Astrith or Margaret, the widow of Ulf jarl.² But Robert found no delight in

¹ According to Florence, Richard II. and III. both died in 1026: the Latin interpolation of the Saxon Chron. places the death of Rich. II. in 1024, and adds, "*Ricardus filius ejus regnavit prope uno anno:*" by William of Jumièges the death of the former is mentioned in 1026, of the latter in 1028; so also in Chron. Turon. ap. Bouquet, t. x.

² Adam of Brem. ii. 38, and Saxo, p. 512, relate that Estrith (Astrith), before her marriage with Ulf, who was murdered in 1025, had been married to Richard of Normandy. This must have been Richard II. But as Estrith's husband is the same prince that went to Jerusalem, it can be only Robert that is meant, and so it is stated by Radulphus Glaber, a nearer contemporary than Adam of Bremen, and who, as an authority for his own time, is by no means undeserving of attention: "*Robertus. Normannorum dux . . . sororem Anglorum regis Canut manifestum est duxisse uxorem, quum odiendo divortium faceret.*" Bouquet, t. x. p. 52.

his consort, and immediately sent her back. From this time Robert, it appears, kept as his mistress Arlot, the daughter of a townsman of Falaise, who brought him a son, whom at the age of fifteen the nobles of Normandy, and in his thirty-sixth year the witena-gemot at London, acknowledged as their sovereign. Robert, now at variance with the brother of the repudiated Astrith, meditated the restoration of the young Anglo-Saxon princes, the sons of his sister, to their paternal rights. An embassy, which for this purpose he sent to Cnut, met with no welcome reception. He then endeavoured by force of arms to support the claims of his nephews, and equipped a considerable fleet at Fécamp, manned with brave warriors, which was driven by a storm back to Jersey, where a wearisome calm drove the impatient duke to the brink of despair; until he found cause to consider himself fortunate in having saved a number of his ships, which he could employ against the duke Alan of Bretagne, between whose country and Normandy warfare rarely ceased. Fragments of many of the ships destroyed on this occasion were shown for a century afterwards at Rouen.¹ Cnut, however, fearing an enemy whom a favourable wind might one day treat more kindly, sought to pacify him by false promises, if not by actual concession. It was thought in Normandy that envoys of the king had promised, in his name, that half of the kingdom should on his death be ceded to the two æthelings, or, in other words, the portion possessed by their brother Eadmund at the time of his death.²

¹ Guil. Gemet. lib. vi. c. 10-12. Wallingford, p. 549. Roman de Rou, v. 7897. Daru, Hist. de Bretagne, i. 98. W. Malmesbury, who alone of all the older English writers mentions this expedition, also ascribes it to Robert. Only Wallingford attributes it to Richard.

² Guil. Gemet. vi. 13.

The last gratification of his ambition enjoyed by Cnut arose from the subjugation of the North British kingdoms, Scotland and Cumberland. Hitherto only the princes of the south of Scotland had paid homage to him, while Duncan, king of Cumberland, and Malcolm the Second had refused to acknowledge the Dane as their liege lord. Preparations for a war against them, made by Cnut at an earlier period, had been stopped through the intervention of duke Richard and queen Emma. But a later and successful expedition, undertaken in common with the Danes at Dublin, against Duncan, to whose aid his uncle Malcolm had vainly hastened, ended in the union, under the suzerainty of the Northern monarch, not only of their states, but those also of the subordinate kings, Mælbæthe (the Macbeth of Shakspeare) and Jehmark.¹

Cnut did not long enjoy these accumulated glories. He was seized with an incurable disease, and died at Shaftesbury on the 11th of November, 1035. His ashes remained in the land to which of all his states he was the most strongly attached, and were deposited in the burial-place of the West Saxon kings at Winchester.² History, which acknowledges him as the most powerful ruler of northern Europe, would honour him also as one of the greatest sovereigns, had not boundless ambition and unbridled passions hurried him into the perpetration of many crimes. On the other hand, tradition has preserved some anecdotes which show him in an estimable and even an amiable light. The story is well

¹ Sax. Chron. H. Hunt. a. 1031. Fordun, iv. 41. Tigernach, a. 1030.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. For the appreciation of Tigernach it may be remarked, that he places the death of Cnut in 1031, and again in 1034.

known, how, to shame his flatterers, he caused his regal chair to be placed on the sea-shore, while the tide was rising, and commanded the waves not to encroach on his earth nor wet his garments; and when the advance of the water rendered retreat necessary, took occasion to expatiate on the vanity of all earthly power in comparison with that of the supreme. From this time it is said, he never wore his crown, but humbly placed it on the head of a crucifix.¹ We next read of him gliding in his barge on the tranquil stream, and expressing in English verse the delight with which he was penetrated on hearing the monks of Ely chant forth their orisons.² But such passages appear like the lonely floweret, which springs forth even from the hard bosom of the rock. Friends and venerators who should feel themselves called on to transmit to posterity a finished, faithful portrait of their king, he has not raised up even among the numerous ecclesiastics whom he fostered, and his contemporaries believed that they had sufficiently proved their gratitude for the benefits conferred by him as a monarch, by silently passing over his manifold transgressions. His vast dominion was soon after his death again divided; and England, which had for centuries borne the Danish yoke in its isolated

¹ H. Hunt. a. 1036. Gaimar, v. 4699.

² The Danish king *may* have extemporized in Anglo-Saxon verse, and *may* have spoken of himself in the third person: at the same time the lines ascribed to him appear to have been composed in reference to him rather than uttered *by* him, and in their present form they can hardly be older than the thirteenth century. They are the following:

“ Merie sungeþ the muneches binnan Ely,
 ƿa Cnut ching reu ƿer by :
 Roweð cnites nær ðe land,
 And here we þes muneches sæng.”

Hist. Eliens. lib. ii. c. 28.—T.

states, and which had finally become a province under the Danish king, only a few years after his death, saw the last victorious Danish warrior. Cnut's reign was, nevertheless, decisive for the future fortunes of England, in having, as it were, broken up the Anglo-Saxon families, and thereby smoothed the way to the impending Norman conquest and its important consequences.

By his queen Ælfgifu-Emma Cnut had two children : 1. Harthacnut, to whom, for the sake of relieving himself from a part of the burden of government, and following a practice not unusual at the time, he assigned during his life the kingdom of Denmark; and 2, a daughter, Gunhild, named also Æthelthryth, betrothed to the German king Henry the Third, and in the following year (1036) conducted to Germany and married to him, by Thiadmar, afterwards bishop of Hildesheim. Two years after her marriage she died in Italy, "as the noble morning star sinks at early dawn," and her body was conveyed to Spire. She left a daughter named Beatrix, who became abbess of Quedlinburg.¹ There were also two other individuals

¹ Wippo de Vita Chunradi Salici. Adam. of Brem. ii. 39. Herman. Marian. Scot. Otto Frising. See Norman traditions about Gunhild, extracted from ballads, in W. Malm. ii. 12. Bromton, col. 933. According to these she was accused of adultery, but was cleared by a judicial combat, in which a dwarf in her service, named Mimecon, fought against and slew a gigantic champion named Rodingar. The account of her having died at Bruges on Aug. 21st, 1042, though supported by an inscription in the church of St. Donat in that city (copied in Miræus, Donat. Belg. lib. ii. c. 23, and Ellis, *Introd. to Domesday*, ii. p. 137), is to be ascribed only to the vanity or self-interest of the monks. Cf. Suhm, *Bd. iv. s. 23. Orig. Guelf. iv. p. 315.* Concerning another Gunhild, the niece of Cnut, see p. 263, and again under the year 1015. See also Kœler, *Diss. de Geneal. Famil. August. Francon.* [Malmesbury, from

whom Cnut treated as his sons, and believed them to be such, by Ælfwyn or Ælfgifu, a daughter of Ælfhelm, earl of Northampton, and the noble lady Wulfrun; but England was convinced that Svend, the elder, was the son of a priest, and Harold the younger, a shoemaker's child, that had been foisted on Cnut by the barren Ælfwyn as their genuine common offspring.¹ We cannot, however, withhold our doubt, whether such a double fraud could have continued undiscovered by Cnut, nor refrain from calling to remembrance the numerous interests that must have conspired to cast suspicion on every pretension to the succession. On Svend Cnut had, as we have seen, bestowed the crown of Norway, to which country his supposed mother accompanied him.² In favour of Harold it does not appear that he had made any disposition, and we can hardly suppose that he would have assigned to him the entire kingdom of England.³

contemporary ballads, speaks of the pomp attending her nuptials and embarkation: "*Cellebris illa pompa nuptialis fuit, et nostro adhuc seculo etiam in trivii cantitata, dum tanti nominis virgo ad navem duceretur, stipantibus omnibus Angliæ præceribus, et in expensas conferentibus quicquid absconderat vel marsupium publicum vel ærarium regium.*"—T.]

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1035. Fl. W. a. 1035. Encom. Emmæ, p. 26 Hist. Rames. c. 94.

² Snorre, c. 252 sq.

³ Sax. Chron. and more particularly, Fl. W. a. 1035. In favour of a contrary opinion the words of Simeon (a. 1035) can hardly be adduced, as he evidently misunderstood what is said by Florence. The expressions of the Encomiast (p. 22), (*Hardecnuto*) "*pater adhuc in omni felicitate degens, omne regnum suæ ditioni subjectum sacramento devinxit,*" prove too much, and may be ascribed to his Norman predilections.

CHAPTER XV.

A.D. 1035-1042.

Harold Harefoot, 1035-1039—His Rule over Mercia and Northumbria—Emma—Godwine—Svend and Magnus—Landing of Eadward—Murder of Ælfred—Harold chosen King of all England—War—Death—Harthacnut, 1039-1042—Coronation—His Vindictiveness—Godwine's Reconciliation—Danegild—Insurrection—Preference for Foreigners—Degradation of the English People—Recall of Eadward—Emma—Svend Estridsen, Founder of future Danish Monarchy—Harthacnut's Death.

IT is probable that Cnut had destined the English crown for Harthacnut, in conformity with the settlement made on his marriage with Emma, though it is far from impossible that, at a later period, after he had become master of six kingdoms, he would have granted the south of England to the sons of Æthelred. But at the time of his father's death, Harthacnut was in Denmark, and, what was still more detrimental to his interests, he does not appear to have enjoyed the goodwill of the Danish population in England. The chiefs, therefore, of the whole country lying to the north of the Thames declared for Harold, but above all Leofric, earl of the Mercians, who had been highly favoured by Cnut, together with the seamen (lithsmen) and soldiers at London who, like the other Danes, had become almost incorporated with the citizens;¹ while those of Anglo-

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1036. W. Malm. ii. 12. "Londoniæ cives, qui jam pene in barbarorum mores propter frequentem convictum transierant."

Saxon race were generally in favour either of one of the sons of Æthelred, or of Harthacnut. No sooner, however, had Harold attained even to this degree of power than he sent an armed force to Winchester, to seize on the treasures left by Cnut in the possession of his queen, to whom that city was now assigned as a residence. For the adjustment of these differences a witenagemot was holden at Oxford, at which, notwithstanding the vigorous opposition of Godwine and the thanes of Wessex, it was determined that the northern parts of the kingdom, comprising Mercia and Northumbria, should be assigned to Harold, while Wessex and the southern parts remained to Harthacnut.¹ By the terms of this settlement, the queen Emma continued to reside at Winchester, in quality of regent of that portion of the realm, during the absence of her son, by whose hus-carls she was attended, under the administration of Godwine. No sooner had the Danish party forced Harold on the northern throne than many, to escape from the horrors of a civil war with which the nation seemed to be threatened, fled with their families, cattle and all their movables to the woods and marshes about Crowland, where they sought help at the hands of the monks, whom they terrified by their importunity and encroachments.² Notwithstanding this settlement by the witan in favour of Harold, Æthelnoth, the venerable archbishop of Canterbury, refused both to crown and to bestow on him his benediction as long as any of the children of Emma survived;³ though it appears that he was afterwards crowned with the customary pomp. In the meanwhile all exertions made in favour

¹ See a remarkable letter about Emma's endeavours to place Harold on the throne, in *Mene's Anzeiger* for 1838. ² *Ingulf*

³ *Encom. Emmæ*, p. 27. "filiis Emmæ reginæ viventibus."

of Harthacnut were vain, and the expressed wishes of his friends for his speedy return fruitless; inactivity, or the affairs of his Danish kingdom, irresistibly detaining him abroad. Svein or Svend, and his mother Ælfgifu of Northampton, had by their tyranny rendered themselves hateful to the people of Norway, who recalled Magnus the son of St. Olaf, a child of ten years, to the throne of his father, from the court of the czar Jaroslav. The intelligence of Cnut's death encouraged the Norwegians even to make an attack on Denmark, to which country Svend had withdrawn, and the contest, in consequence of the death of that prince, which happened a few months afterwards, was terminated, after oaths of perpetual fraternity and peace, by an arrangement, that whichever of the two youthful sovereigns survived, the other should succeed to his throne, provided the latter left no son.¹ During these events and negotiations, it must after all have appeared more prudent to Harthacnut to secure both his crown and himself by a protracted stay in Denmark, than to listen to the equivocal solicitations of his ambitious mother and Godwine. Disease also, and the Northern propensity to copious potations, appear even at that period to have unfitted him for the execution of any plans of importance.

The absence of Harthacnut must naturally have excited anew the hopes of the pretenders to the crown who were resident at Rouen, and have encouraged their friends to venture on an attempt for the re-establishment of the Anglo-Saxon dynasty. Eadward had never wholly relinquished the hope of one day ascending the throne of his fathers, and, in furtherance of that object, had entered into various connections, both secular and

¹ Theod. de Reg. Norv. lib. i. cc. 21, 22.

ecclesiastical, in Flanders and the Saxon countries. We even find donations promised by him, in the event of his one day ascending the throne.¹ Emma, as we are informed, now sent a letter to her two sons by Æthelred, urgently desiring that at least one of them would come over to her at Winchester, for the purpose of consulting with her as to the means necessary to be adopted for the recovery of their lost inheritance. Whatever Emma's object in sending this letter, supposing it to be genuine, may have been, or Harold's, if it were a forgery perpetrated by his command, it equally proves the existence of a party devoted to the æthelings Eadward and Ælfred, which fostered hope in one quarter, while it excited apprehensions in another, both equally remote from realization. Distrust or precipitancy probably prevented the young princes from attending to the intimations accompanying the invitation. Having assembled a well-appointed body of Norman followers, Eadward embarked at Barfleur with forty ships, for the purpose of renewing the attempt which had proved so unsuccessful under duke Robert, and landed at Southampton, whence he hastened to his mother at Winchester, but found a cold reception from the people. The Normans in his company, who began to plunder as in an enemy's country, were attacked by the people, to whom they were objects of inveterate hatred, and whose numbers rapidly became so formidable, that Eadward, returning to the asylum he had left, abandoned all hope of gaining a kingdom which, in the quiet of his exile, he had often renounced all thoughts of recovering by foreign arms.²

¹ For the abbey of St. Peter at Ghent, see charter of 1016.

² Fl. W. a. 1036. Encom. Emmæ, p. 29. Roman de Rou, v. 9773 sq. Guil. Pictav. ap. Du Chesne, p. 178, ed. Maseras, p. 37, copied by Guil. Gemet. lib. vii. c. 8.

The ætheling Ælfred went in the meanwhile to Bruges, where his cousin Alienor, a daughter of Richard the Second, duke of Normandy, and her consort Baldwin, count of Flanders, probably still lived, and their son Baldwin the Fifth then reigned.¹ Baldwin offered military aid to his relation, which Ælfred declined, in the belief that it would not be needful; and took with him only a few soldiers belonging to Eustace, count of Boulogne,² in addition to his own followers. He embarked at Witsand, and, after a vain attempt to land at a place beset with the adherents of Harold, directed his course to another port, apparently Sandwich, at which he disembarked, and proceeded to Canterbury, where he was joyfully received by the people and their archbishop. He was soon met by the perfidious Godwine, who with affected joy pledged his faith to him, and, avoiding London, the residence of Harold, conducted him to Guildford, where he caused the weary followers of the ætheling to be quartered in small bodies about the town, when, after being plentifully plied with meat and drink, they gladly retired to rest. At this juncture the satellites of Harold appeared, and having seized the weapons of their victims, loaded them with manacles and fetters, thus securing them for the horrors of the approaching day. In the morning, with their hands bound behind them, in number about six hundred, they were delivered to the executioners, who had orders to spare only every tenth man, according to lot; the others were either massacred, or reduced to slavery, or exposed in chains to the derision of their

¹ Guil. Gemet. lib. v. c. 13. Roman de Rou, v. 7005, *note*^o.

² W. Malm. ii. 13. Eustace by his second marriage was the husband of Goda, a daughter of Æthelred, and widow of Diogo, count of Mantua.

enemies. The ætheling himself was also seized and conducted to Ely, subjected to the insulting taunts of one of Harold's followers. By a court of ruffians summoned for the purpose, he was condemned to have his eyes put out—a barbarous sentence which was by main force carried into execution—and then to suffer death. His corpse was honourably interred by the monks of that cloister. “No bloodier deed,” says the Saxon poet, “had been done in this land since the Danes came.”¹ Harold, and, even to a greater degree, Godwine—who showed himself on this occasion but too like his great-uncle, the infamous Eadric Streona—have by this deed called down on themselves feelings of the most intense horror and loathing, and no appeal to orders received from the king, and other excuses, have ever sufficed to exculpate the latter in the eyes either of his Anglo-Saxon and Norman contemporaries, or of posterity. After this event, by which the security of Harold seemed threatened, Emma herself was, though in the depth of winter, driven out of England. She fled to Bruges, where she found an hospitable reception from the count Baldwin and his consort Athala (Adela), the daughter of Robert king of France.²

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1036, who translates the Chronicle: also Sim. Dunelm. Hist. Eliens. lib. ii. c. 32. Roman de Rou, v. 9805. Encom. Emmæ. Guil. Pictav. Maseres, p. 38. Huntingdon agrees closely with Wace, but places the event some years later.

² The above narrative is chiefly derived from the Encomium Emmæ, in which no mention is made of some of the cruelties perpetrated on the wretched victims of the execrable Harold and his equally execrable tool, Godwine. According to the Chronicle and Florence, some were blinded, some mutilated, others scalped. In these authorities it is said, moreover, that the ætheling, after his eyes had been barbarously put out, survived some time in the monastery of Ely. William of Poitiers says that he was blinded

Harold now attained the object of his ambition ; by the united voices of the witan and people, he was chosen king of all England,¹ while Harthacnut, in consequence of his still lingering in Denmark, was declared to have forfeited all claim to the portion of the country that had been assigned him. Of Harold's reign no details are preserved. That he was desirous of gaining the goodwill of the monks appears from presents made by him to some religious houses, among others the abbey of Crowland, on which he bestowed his coronation mantle.² The treasures of Cnut and Emma enabled him to be munificent without oppressing the people ; on which account the partisans of the latter exclaim bitterly against the profaneness and prodigality of a king, who, instead of attending mass, wasted his time in the pleasures of the chase, for his agility and speed in which he acquired the surname of Harefoot.³ The circumstance of the Welsh, under their valiant prince Griffith, the son of Llewellyn, having fought successfully against the English (of whom many men of rank were slain, among whom are named Eadwine, the brother of earl Leofric, Thurkil and Ælfget),⁴ betrays a weakness which England appeared to have outgrown.

at London in the presence of Harold, then placed naked on a horse, with his feet tied beneath the saddle, and so conducted to Ely ; and that, in consequence of an injury done to his brain in depriving him of his eyes, his speedy death was inevitable.—T.

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1037.

² Hence it appears that his coronation did take place, notwithstanding the refusal of archbishop Æthelnoth already mentioned. With the reason of the primate's compliance we are unacquainted.—T.

³ Encom. Emmæ, p. 28.

⁴ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1039.

While through occurrences of this kind the position of Harold was anything but strengthened, Harthacnut and his counsellors were successful in their endeavours to secure the realm of Denmark against internal and external enemies. The young monarch who could now without hazard listen to the solicitations which reached him from Bruges, sailed with ten ships to Flanders, where he remained during the winter; but scarcely was the season again favourable for traversing the ocean, when intelligence arrived of the death of Harold, who had expired suddenly at Oxford on the 17th of March, 1039, and was buried at Westminster.¹

In England the people were unanimous in the choice of a new sovereign: Harthacnut alone could satisfy the desires both of the Saxons and the Danes. Four years previously the West Saxons had declared in his favour, and for the Danes he was the nearest in order of succession. For a short season, therefore, two Northern crowns were still to be united on one head, and afterwards to be separated for ever into parallel careers, though with fortunes most unlike, and only in extremely rare cases, to be allied or opposed to each other through similar or contending interests.

Harthacnut had excited greater hopes than he realized. A deputation of the clergy and laity (among whom Ælfweard, bishop of London,² is mentioned by name) was by the witenagemot sent to Bruges, to invite him and his mother to England, that he might ascend the throne of the great and mighty Cnut. The young prince complied with the invitation, and with sixty ships, which he had already collected in the harbour of Sluys (het Zwyn) for the purpose of a war with

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1040. Encom. Emmæ, p. 34.

² Hist. Rames. c. 95.

Harold,¹ sailed to the Thames, where tumultuous joy and the pomp of a coronation-solemnity awaited him. Emma now seeing all the wishes gratified which she had formed with regard to her son, even before his birth, turned her thoughts to secure vengeance on those who had been instrumental in excluding him from regal power in England, and in effecting her own banishment. Eadulf, earl of Northumbria, a relation of Harthacnut, had been received by him with feigned friendship, and was at his command murdered by Siward (Sigeweard), on whom that powerful earldom was afterwards bestowed.² Ælfrie, archbishop of York, earl Godwine, Styr the majordomo, Eadric the dispenser, and Thronð the executioner, men, though widely differing in station, yet, as we are informed, all of high dignity, were sent to London for the purpose of disinterring the corpse of Harold, which, after decapitation, was thrown into a fen, whence the king commanded it to be dragged and cast into the Thames, where having been found by a fisherman, it was delivered to the Danes in London, by whom it was honourably buried in their cemetery of St. Clement's.³ The anger of the king was strongly excited against Godwine and Living, bishop of Worcester, through the charge preferred against them by archbishop Ælfrie and others

¹ Adam. Brem. ii. 54. [Het Zwyn is strictly the narrow arm of the sea which forms the entrance to the harbour of Sluys.—T.]

² Sax. Chron. a. 1041. Sim. Dunelm. p. 204. For Siward's descent, cf. the fabulous work "De Comitibus Hunten, et Northampt." ap. Langebek, iii. p. 287 sq.

³ W. Malm. ii. 13. "per Alfricum, Eboracensem, episcopum, et alios, quos nominare piget, Haraldi cadavere defosso, caput truncari, et miserando mortalibus exemplo, in Tamesim projici jussit;" and De Pont. iii. "habetur (Elfricus in hoc detestabilis, quod Hardacnutus ejus consilio fratris sui Haroldi cadavere defosso," etc.—T.

of being parties to the murder of the ætheling Ælfred ; in consequence of which Harthacnut deprived Living of his see and conferred it on Ælfric, who did not long enjoy it, as in the following year Living, having made his peace with the king, the bishopric was taken from Ælfric and restored to him. Godwine's reconciliation with his sovereign was, no doubt, greatly facilitated by the present of a most splendid ship, having a gilded beak, and being equipped in the most perfect manner, and manned with eighty warriors. Every man bore a golden bracelet on each arm of sixteen ounces weight, was armed with a strongly woven habergeon ; wore a helmet partly gilt ; was girded with a gilded sword, and had a Danish axe bound with gold and silver hanging from his left shoulder ; while in his left hand was a shield, the boss and nails of which were gilded, and in his right a lance called by the English 'ætgar.' The luxury lavished on the equipment of this vessel proves how much dearer their floating dwellings on the ocean, and their warlike accoutrements were to the Danes, than palaces and the arts of peace. Godwine, moreover, declared on his oath, and that of the chief dignitaries of the kingdom, that it was neither by his advice, nor according to his desire, that the ætheling had been blinded, but that his lord, king Harold, had commanded him to do what he did.¹

One of Harthacnut's first cares must have been to reward in a fitting manner the mariners of the fleet which had conducted him to England. The

¹ Fl. W. a. 1040. This description of the vessel by so credible an author as Florence may tend to confirm the accounts in the *Encom. Emmæ* and *Snorre*, as well as of other Scandinavian and Norman writers, relative to the extreme splendour of the ships and equipments at that period.

natives, who under Cnut had long been relieved from the heavy burthen of Danegild, that prince having retained in service only sixteen ships, felt themselves aggrieved, when, in a time of profound peace, a sum of thirty-two thousand pounds of silver was demanded from them, for the fleet and army. Of the fleet each rower received eight marks, and each steersman twelve.¹ In Worcester the people rose, and the two hus-carls Feader and Thurstan, who had been sent to collect the Danegild, were slain by the populace in a tower of the minster to which they had fled for refuge. This deed of violence was followed by a late though severe retribution. After a lapse of six months the earls Leofric of Mercia, Godwine of the West Saxons, Siward of Northumbria, Thor of the middle Angles,² and Roni of the Magesætas, with a large army, including the greater part of the hus-carls, entered the country, which they ravaged and plundered during four days, and on the fifth day burnt the city,—an act to which Harthacnut is said to have been instigated by Ælfrie, because the inhabitants had rejected him for their bishop.³ The people owed their lives, some to flight, others to a position favourable for defence on an island called Beverege in the Severn.⁴ The bitterest complaints of the insolence and brutality of the Danes,

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1039. Fl. W. a. 1040. W. Malm. (ii. 13) mentions twenty or thirty marks.

² Florence (a. 1041) styles him "*Mediterraneorum comes.*" He is mentioned in a charter of Harthacnut as "*comes de Huntindon.*" Hist. Rames. c. 98.

³ Malmesb. de Pont. iii. "(Elfricus) Wigornensibus pro repulsa episcopatus infensus, author Hardecnuto fuit, ut, quod illi peritiniacius exactoribus regionum vectigalium obstiterant, urbem incenderet, fortunas civium abraderet."—T.

⁴ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1041.

have been transmitted by the chroniclers. If a hundred Anglo-Saxons met one Dane, they were obliged to stand still and humbly greet him; if they saw him coming over a bridge, they had to wait till he had passed. A Dane was quartered in every Anglo-Saxon house, where he ruled as absolute master, the wife and daughters of the owner being in all things the slaves of his will.¹

Harthacnut and Emma, whose influence over her son was all-powerful, were not less mindful of the monks than of the soldiery. Masses for the soul of king Cnut were founded,² which, during the very short reign of this king, contributed to increase the already large landed possessions of the clergy. More interesting to us is the resolution of Harthacnut to recall his half-brother Eadward from Normandy, and to treat him in a manner befitting his exalted birth. Eadward, whose character was such as to exclude even the shadow of suspicion that he could at any time endanger the security of the throne, came accompanied by a number of Norman ecclesiastics, and also by his nephew Radulf, a son of Goda, the daughter of Æthelred, and her first husband, Drogo of Mantes.³

¹ G. Gaimar, *v.* 4764 sq. Bromton, 934. Knyghton, 2325. [Such a state of things could have been but momentary, and confined to a few places, in a country where the clergy were all natives, and even great military power must have been in the hands of Godwine and other Saxon earls.—T.]

² Hist. Rames. c. 96.

³ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. 1041. Encom. Emmae, p. 36. Hist. Rames. c. 116. According to Malmesbury (ii. 13) Harthacnut gave his sister Gunhild in marriage to the emperor Henry; but, as we have seen (p. 269), she was already dead when Harthacnut ascended the throne. The Hist. Rames. c. 102, has the same inaccuracy. By the chroniclers cited above, the name of Goda's second son, Walter, is erroneously given to her husband. Drogo died by poison

It was not without cause that Harthacnut so long deferred his departure from Denmark, which was constantly threatened by his bitter enemies the Norwegians, who soon availed themselves of his absence to begin a new war with that kingdom. Harthacnut, who was not inclined to leave a country in which he was indulging in a sensuality to which he had previously been a stranger, and in which he had acquired a cheaply earned reputation for munificence,¹ intrusted the command of the fleet, sent against the Norwegian king Magnus, to Svein, or Svend Estridsen. This prince, the son of Astrith, the sister of Cnut, by Ulf jarl, had after his father's murder fled to James, king of Sweden, under whom, during a stay of twelve years, he gained experience in the art of war. On the accession of Harthacnut to the throne of England, Svend, who had a very near claim to the crown of Denmark, passed over to his cousin, but on his voyage was driven by a storm on the coast of Hadeln, where, unable to repress his piratical habits, he was taken prisoner by some soldiers of the archbishop of Bremen, stationed at Ritzebüttel, or one of the neighbouring garrisons. The archbishop, Bezelin Alebrand, had prudence enough to treat the violence committed by the presumptive heir

at Nice with duke Robert, on his pilgrimage. See Orderic Vitalis, pp. 487, 655, and Roman de Rou, v. 8381.

“Li quens Drogēs od li morut
Del beuire dont li dus but.”

His son Walter espoused Biota, the daughter of Herbert I. count of Mans, and is interesting to us on account of his hostilities against William the Conqueror. See Guil. Pictav. p. 189.

¹ H. Hunt. a. 1042, and, from him, Addit. ad Sigebert. Gembl. ap. Bouquet. t. xi. p. 637.

to the Danish crown as a youthful prank or rashness, and at Bremen he strove, by honourable entertainment and munificence, to make the best of the blunder committed by his brave, but short-sighted officers. On his arrival in England, Svend followed the orders of the king, in the execution of which he found a powerful prompter in his own interest; but being totally defeated by the Norwegians, he fled back to England.¹ On his landing he found that Harthacnut was no more. At a feast given at Lambeth in celebration of the marriage of Gytha, the daughter of Osgod Clapa, a person of high consideration, with the powerful Dane Tovi, surnamed the Proud,² Harthacnut appeared full of health and hilarity, but while standing with the bride and some other persons, he fell suddenly to the ground while in the act of raising the cup to his lips, was carried home speechless, and died in the course of a day or two. His body was laid by that of his father at Winchester.³

¹ Adam. Brem. ii. 55-57. Theod. de Reg. Norw. c. 24.

² Perhaps the standard-bearer of Cnut, who laid the first foundation of the abbey of Waltham in Essex. Monast. Angl. t. vi. p. 56.

³ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1042, 8th June.

PART V.

RESTORATION AND END OF THE ANGLO-SAXON
DYNASTY.

CHAPTER XVI.

A.D. 1042-1052.

Eadward the Third, surnamed the Confessor—Godwine and his Sons—Return to England of Eadward—His Marriage—Pretensions of Svend—Coronation—Emma—Stigand—Gunbilde—Magnus—Incursions of Norsemen—Harald Hardrada—Flanders—Expulsion of Danes—Abolition of Danegild—Norman Ecclesiastics—Westminster Abbey—Council—Favour shown to Normans—Banishment and Disgrace of Godwine's Family.

THROUGH the sudden death of Harthacnut, who departed childless, with no relatives around him, and in his last hours speechless, the Anglo-Saxon throne naturally reverted to the line of its ancient possessors which still existed, both in the posterity of Eadmund Ironside in Hungary, and in the person of his brother Eadward. The thoughts of all were immediately turned towards the latter; and before the corpse of Harthacnut could be laid in the grave, Eadward was solemnly proclaimed king at London.¹

In his earlier years Eadward had often shown himself

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1042.

desirous of recovering the throne of his forefathers, and of asserting his rights by force of arms, but every ambitious thought had long been quelled within him; monastic occupations had for many years engaged his attention and destroyed the energy required in the station of ruler of a kingdom which had repeatedly and recently refused him for its sovereign; and his stay at the Anglo-Danish court had shown him the strength of the hostile parties within the country, the danger threatened from the North, and the instability and weakness of his friends. So conscious was he that far other energies than his were needful to direct and control all these hostile, and scarcely less dangerous friendly elements, that he felt inclined to refuse the portentous gift, and disheartened cast himself at the feet of Godwine, imploring him to facilitate his return to the quiet of a Norman cloister.¹ Only the most persuasive eloquence of Godwine and of bishop Living could prevail on him to accept the crown.² The crafty earl plainly perceived that he had no present prospect of supplanting the several pretenders to the throne, and that Eadward, though strong in the love of his people, confirmed by so many sufferings, as well as through the connection subsisting between the royal house and many of the continental sovereigns, yet weak in character and from education, as well as through lack of military talents and estrangement from his native land, must, like his father, inevitably become a most

¹ William of Poitiers says that Eadward was at this time in Normandy; but, as a Norman, he attaches too much importance to the influence of the young duke William. That Eadward was in England is evident from the English chroniclers, and from William of Jumièges: Malmesbury also (ii. 13) says, "*orantem in Normanniam reditus auxilium.*"

² Fl. W. a. 1042. W. Malm. ii. 13.

pliant tool in the hands of a skilful manager. Godwine could scarcely doubt that he and his powerful sons would be able to seize and hold the reins of government, though, at the same time, he neglected nothing that might contribute to his success. His sons held enlarged or newly created provinces and offices: his own earldom comprised, besides Sussex (of which his father had borne the honourable title of 'child'), Kent and the greater part of the south of Wessex. Of his sons, Harold ruled over East Anglia, the shires of Huntingdon, Cambridge and Essex,¹ and Sweyn over the north of Wessex, or the shires of Oxford, Gloucester, Hereford, Somerset and Berks,² which contiguous provinces constituted the richest and largest half of England. The younger sons, Tostig, Gurth, Leofwine and Wulfnoth, we shall have occasion to speak of hereafter. But not alone through his sons was Godwine resolved to rule; he effected a marriage between his daughter Eadgyth and Eadward, a connection which must necessarily increase his already preponderating influence. Eadgyth possessed endowments of no common kind, fervent piety, extensive learning and great personal attractions, which, with reference to her father and brothers, gained for the childless queen the appellation of "the rose among the thorns," as well as the homage and grateful remembrance of the people. Yet she never won her consort's love or confidence, who, either from aversion for her relations, or, what is more probable, in obedience to some former vow, lived apart from her in monkish celibacy.³

¹ Harold appears as "dux" in a charter of Harthacnut. See Smith's *Beda*, p. 780.

² Fl. W. a. 1051.

³ W. Malm. ii. 13. The fullest and warmest praise of Eadgyth is bestowed on her by Ingulf, who is stated to have known her in

To considerations so favourable to his views, Godwine sacrificed the other pretenders to the throne. Among these was the nearest relative of Harthacnut, Svend, the son of Cnut's sister by Ulf jarl, the brother-in-law of Godwine. Svend, who had landed in England at an unfortunate moment, immediately after his defeat at sea by king Magnus, found no support to his pretensions; but Eadward, who well knew the bold energetic character of the Danish prince, promised—so at least Svend Estridsen himself, the future king of Denmark, often declared to his friends,¹—even should he leave sons behind him, to declare Svend the successor to the English throne; whereupon, pacified by this assurance, which, without the ratification of the witan, was of no validity, he left England to engage in a new warfare with Magnus. Even this last-mentioned king made pretension to the crown of England as well as that of Denmark, founded on the treaty between him and Harthacnut, which, not to mention its invalidity in a legal point of view, must have appeared the more groundless to the Anglo-Saxons, as Harthacnut, at the time of its execution, was not himself in possession of England.

his boyhood and gratefully revered her. [The chronicler says of her, “de illa dicebatur illud elegiacum,

Sicut spina rosam, genuit Godwinus Egitham.

Vidi ego illam multotiens, cum patrem meum in regis curia morantem adhuc puer inviserem, et sæpius mihi de scholis venienti de literis ac versu meo apponebat, cum occurrerem, et libentissime de grammatica soliditate ad logicam levitatem qua callebat declinans, cum argumentorum subtili ligamine me conclusisset, semper tribus aut quatuor nummis per ancillulam numeratis ad regium penu transmisit et refectum dimisit.”—T.]

¹ Adam. Brem. lib. ii. c. 57, lib. iii. c. 12.

In consequence of the delay attending the choice of a king, and dismissing the unwelcome pretender, as well as owing to the season, the ceremony of coronation did not take place till the following Easter-day; when it was performed at Winchester with Anglo-Saxon pomp by Eadsige, archbishop of Canterbury, assisted by Ælfric, archbishop of York, in the presence of almost all the prelates of the realm.¹ On this occasion Eadsige addressed a long discourse to the new sovereign on the duties incumbent on him who wields the kingly sceptre, exhorting him to act under all circumstances in the manner most conducive to the welfare of his people.

The first opponent with whom king Eadward had to struggle was his own mother. Emma had repeatedly shown how little she was attached to her children by Æthelred, and this want of affection had been sufficiently marked to excite the belief, which, though never confirmed, was entertained by many, that she was not altogether guiltless of the murder of Ælfred. To the accession of Eadward she had opposed no hindrance, merely because she reckoned on his weak and pliant disposition. The priest Stigand, her friend and adviser, who had been recently raised to the dignity of bishop of the East Angles, confirmed her in her selfish conduct, an instance of which is manifested in her withholding all pecuniary succour from her son before his accession to the throne. Eadward was naturally the less inclined to acknowledge his mother's right to the treasure still in her possession, as her pretensions were founded on the donation of Cnut, whom he could not regard otherwise than as the robber of his inheritance. Three, therefore, of the chief men of the kingdom, Godwine,

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1043.

Leofric and Siward, were appointed to accompany the king from Gloucester to Winchester, for the purpose of taking from the queen-mother all her hoards of gold, silver, jewels and other precious things. Her son left her, however, a sufficiency for her maintenance, and allowed her to remain unmolested at Winchester. Stigand also paid the penalty of his counsels, his see together with all his possessions being taken from him, though in the following year he was restored to his bishopric.¹

With these court intrigues is probably connected the banishment of Gunhild—daughter of Cnut's sister—together with her sons, Heming and Thorkell. She had been married to Hakon jarl, and secondly to Harald jarl, son of Thorkell, who on his return from Rome was slain on the Elbe by duke Ordulf of Saxony, who was desirous of destroying an opponent of his father-in-law, king Magnus of Norway, in his attempts to acquire the crown of Denmark.² On the death of Magnus [1047], Gunhild returned to Denmark, after having passed some time at Bruges, in which city her noble donations to the religious houses were held in grateful remembrance, though in later times they have been ascribed to Gunhild, the daughter of Cnut, and wife of the emperor Henry the Third.³ Osgod Clapa, the friend of Harthacnut and shire-reeve of Middlesex,⁴ was also banished, and the same fate attended all those who had shown any opposition to the election of Eadward.⁵

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. aa. 1043, 1044.

² Adam. Brem. ii. 58. The murder was committed on the 13th Nov. 1042. Cf. Wedekind's *Noten*, Th. ii. Magnus died in 1047.

³ Sax. Chron. a. 1045. Fl. W. a. 1044.

⁴ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1046. Charter ap. Hickes, *Gramm. A. S.* p. 158. Osgod Clapa was also the stallere, or constable, of the kingdom. Sax. Chron. a. 1047.

⁵ W. Malm. ii. 13.

But Eadward had to provide not only against domestic, but also against foreign enemies. King Magnus had waged a successful war with Svend Estridsen, and apprehensions were entertained that he would turn his arms against England; as a precautionary measure, a very powerful fleet¹ was assembled at Sandwich, where the king in person awaited the probable arrival of the Northmen; but Svend having in the meanwhile renewed the war with Norway, the fleet of Magnus was detained in the Baltic. Svend now sent ambassadors to England, soliciting the aid of a fleet against the Norwegians. In the deliberations which ensued on this application, Godwine advised that a force of at least fifty vessels, completely manned and armed, should be sent to his succour; but the opposite counsel of Leofric, which was also in conformity with the general feeling, prevailed in the witenagemot; and the aid solicited was refused, on the plea that it was not advisable to risk under untried leaders, the fleet which might ere long be required to withstand an attempt of Magnus on England; and especially Svend, if successful, threatened to be as dangerous to England as the Norwegian. In the next battle between the two Northern princes, Svend was totally defeated, and driven from Denmark, and Magnus left in sole possession of both kingdoms.²

The sound judgment of Godwine was soon made apparent. Immediately after the termination of the war with Denmark, twenty Norwegian ships, commanded by Yrling and Lothen, appeared before Sandwich, plundered that rich commercial town, and, being driven from the Isle of Thanet by the valour of the inhabi-

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1056. "mycel scyp-ferd." Fl. W. a. 1045. "classis prævalida."

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1047.

tants, ravaged the county of Essex. From the English coast the Norwegians directed their course to Flanders, for the purpose of there disposing of their rich booty in security, while they themselves proceeded to join the banner of their king, which had been unfurled anew. Svend had betaken himself to king James of Sweden, aided by whom, and in violation of the oaths of amity which he had sworn, he made another attempt on Denmark.¹ By the sudden death of Magnus, who was killed by a fall from his horse, Svend now became undisputed king of Denmark, and Harald, surnamed Hardráda, or the Severe, succeeded to the throne of Norway; by which events England was freed from all apprehension of a renewed attack from the Northmen. Both Harald and Svend sent ambassadors to Eadward, for the purpose of entering into a friendly alliance with England, and met with a welcome reception; Svend, however, it is said, received from Eadward an annual payment, after having threatened him with a new Danish invasion.²

A misunderstanding with Baldwin, count of Flanders, became daily more apparent. Bruges was the resort of the Anglo-Saxon exiles, and armaments against their native country were often fitted out from that place. Thither Osgod Clapa had also betaken himself, and manned a fleet of thirty-nine ships at Ulpe,³ and there

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1048. Huntingdon calls them "principes Danorum," but both the connection of events and even the name make it probable that Norwegians are to be understood.

² Adam. Brem. iii. 12. The personal acquaintance of this chronicler with king Svend Estridsen renders all that he says relative to these transactions particularly worthy of notice.

³ Sax. Chron. F' W. a. 1049. The position of Ulpe or Wulpe, a village on the coast of Flanders to the N.W. of Sluys, mentioned in the poems of Gudrun and Lambrecht (see Grimm's

too Sweyn, the son of Godwine, made his appearance. This young earl, accompanied by Griffith, king of North Wales, had commanded an expedition into West Wales. On his return he cast his eyes on Eadgifu, abbess of Leominster, whom he got into his power, kept her with him as long as his passion lasted, and afterwards sent her back to her cloister. For this outrage Sweyn would have made reparation by marriage, but this could not be permitted;¹ to avoid, therefore, the consequences of his crime, he left his earldom, which the king divided between Harold, the brother of Sweyn, and Björn, a brother of king Svend, and he joined his Danish cousin with a considerable number of ships; but in consequence of some misunderstanding with the Danes he left them, and followed his countrymen to Flanders. These military adventurers probably fought under Baldwin's banner in the war, which, in alliance with the duke of Lorraine and other neighbouring princes, he was carrying on against the emperor Henry the Third, whose indignation he had provoked by the destruction of the noble imperial palace at Nimeguen, and by other deeds of violence. The emperor summoned the king of Denmark to his aid with a fleet, who obeyed the summons and took the oath of fealty to the German sovereign.² Application was also made to Eadward to guard the sea with a fleet, that Baldwin might not escape, and he, under the existing circumstances, readily complied with this desire, and lay with a considerable number of ships ready for sea at Sand-

Heldensage, p. 330), is pointed out by Mone, *Quellen und Forschungen*, Bd. i. 13.

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1046. Fl. W. a. 1049.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1049. Lambert. Schafnaburg, a. 1046 sq.

wich, until the emperor had obtained all that he demanded from Baldwin.

Sweyn had in the meanwhile become tired of the homeless life of a sea-rover,¹ and returned to king Eadward, soliciting the restoration of his lands, which was however opposed by the earls Harold and Björn, who refused to surrender the portions which had been given to them by the king. Sweyn then solicited Björn, who with Godwine was stationed with a fleet of forty-two sail at Pevensey, to accompany him to the king, who still lay at Sandwich, it being his wish, as he said, to make peace with his sovereign and renew his oath of fealty. Suspecting no treachery, Björn readily complied with the wish of his relative, and taking with him three companions only, he set out with the intention of going to Sandwich, but was persuaded by Sweyn first to accompany him to his ships, which he had left at Bosham. On arriving at this place, Sweyn endeavoured to prevail on him to go on shipboard; on his refusal he was seized by the seamen, thrown into a boat and bound, and thus conveyed on board of Sweyn's ship, which sailed with him to Dartmouth, where he was murdered and buried deep in the earth.² That private vengeance was the immediate cause of this atrocious deed cannot be doubted, though it may, perhaps, be partly ascribed to the deep-rooted hatred fostered by the Anglo-Saxons towards the Danes, which was, moreover, soon rendered more manifest by the

¹ W. Malm. ii. 13. "pirata factus, prædis marinis virtutes majorum polluit."

² See the double narrative in the Sax. Chron., and Fl. W. a. 1049. [According to one of the accounts in the Chronicle, they sailed with him to Exmouth, and buried him in a church. His body was afterwards taken up by order of Harold, and buried by the side of Cnut's at Winchester.—T.]

expulsion from England of Asbiorn (Esbern) with all his followers, whereby Danish influence in public affairs was totally annihilated.¹ The murderer Sweyn was outlawed, and with two ships fled to Bruges, where he passed the winter. If the history of this period did not speak in almost every page of the vast influence of the house of Godwine in England, an incontrovertible proof of its existence would be found in the recall of the murderer Sweyn to his country in the following year, and his reconciliation with the king, at the intercession, it is said, of Ealdred bishop of Worcester.²

The hatefulness of the crime perpetrated by Sweyn was much extenuated in the eyes of his contemporaries by the beneficial consequences attending it. By the expulsion of all the powerful Danes it became practicable to relieve the nation from the burden of Danegild, the most odious of the numerous taxes under which the nation groaned. Such a measure could only be gradually carried into execution, and it was not till the year 1049³ that the last steps for its abolition were taken, when the king dismissed nine Danish ships, retaining five only with their crews (lithsmen) in his service for the next twelve months. In the following summer the Anglo-Saxon looked with feelings of gladness on his havens, in which no longer waved the hated Danish flag; and on the towers of London, now no longer guarded by a mercenary and privileged band of hus-carls.

But the wounds that had been inflicted on the

¹ Adam. Brem. iii. 14. "Eo tempore separabant se Angli a regno Danorum," etc.

² Sax. Chron. a. 1050. Fl. W. a. 1049.

³ Sax. Chron. a. 1049.

national feelings were hardly healed, when they were opened anew by the king himself in a way no less painful and perilous. Eadward had spent not only his youthful years, which are wont to give a fixed direction to the inclinations and the character, but also those of his maturer age, in which the indissoluble bonds of love and habit hold us even till death, in a country widely differing in climate, manners and language from the land of his birth. The higher those intellectual enjoyments raised him, to which he could devote himself in the leisure of his peaceful position, so much the more excusable and powerful must be his conviction, that the participators in the sentiments which made him happy had a claim to his entire confidence, and to the support of the whole power committed to him by the Almighty. On leaving the soil of his education and his joys, the hearty greeting of the West Saxon peasant sounded strange to his ear, and spoke not to his heart. The rugged manners of the Anglo-Danish nobles, from intercourse with whom he could no longer take refuge under the peaceful arches of a cloister, filled him with disgust, while the independent spirit of the Anglo-Saxon clergy, who in language and through ancient tradition had ever been divided from the church of Rome, appeared to the orthodox Catholic little better than damnable heresy. Above all things, Eadward was anxious to introduce Norman ecclesiastics into his kingdom, and through them to bring it into closer relationship with the papal chair. Soon after his accession, the see of London becoming vacant by the death of bishop Ælfweard, he bestowed it on Robert the Frank, a monk of Jumièges, who is said to have shown particular kindness to Eadward in his days of need. A few years afterwards Robert succeeded Eadsige in the

dignity of archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England. Other French ecclesiastics were appointed chaplains to the king, which post in this as in other countries may be regarded as the nursery of its future bishops. On one of them named William, the see of London was bestowed, at the instance of Robert and the command of the pope, although the king had already conferred it under his writ and seal on Spearhafoc (Sparrowhawk), whose rich abbey of Abingdon had been given to Radulf, a relation of Eadward. Another Norman, named Ulf, received the bishopric of Dorchester, and thus all the best vacant benefices fell into the hands of foreigners, a state of things to which the English Church had till then been a stranger. Foreign, but more especially Norman, monasteries and churches were richly gifted¹ by the king, the queen and the chiefs of the nation. The displeasure may appear striking which the bishops appointed by Eadward excited at the papal court; yet, scanty as the accounts are which have reached us on the subject, we may, perhaps, be justified in assuming that it was not against the individuals, but solely on account of the contentions respecting the right of investiture and the pretensions of the papacy, with which all Europe was at that time filled. Eadward himself, desirous of manifesting his veneration for Rome, had vowed to undertake a pilgrimage to the residence of the vicegerent of God on earth; but he was, at the same time, sensible of the duties of a sovereign and of the sound-

¹ Ellis, *Introd. to Domesday*, i. pp. 304, 324. Among the favoured ones was Gervinus, abbot of St. Riquier, who declined the kiss of salutation and peace offered by queen Eadgyth; whence the Anglo-Saxon bishops and abbots were freed from this custom, which they regarded as indecorous.

ness of the counsel of his friends, which were both in opposition to his lengthened absence from his kingdom. He, therefore, sent as ambassadors to Rome, Hereman, a Fleming, his former chaplain, who had been raised to the see of Sherborne, and Ealdred, bishop of Worcester, to be present at the council appointed to be holden after the Easter festival, who brought him from pope Leo the Ninth a release from his vow, on the condition of his causing a minster to be erected in honour of St. Peter and St. Paul. By this pious prince it was not regarded as too great a sacrifice to employ a tenth of his annual revenue for such a purpose. The stately pile arose on the isle of Thorney, on the west side of London, and on the site of the church erected by Sæberht, king of Essex, which had long lain in a state of ruin. In the last year of his reign Eadward enjoyed the satisfaction of ordering the consecration of his church, at which solemnity he was represented by his queen,¹ though by his last illness he was prevented from beholding it; and Westminster abbey was the last legacy bequeathed to posterity by a king of the royal race of Cerdic.

As another instance of the homage paid by Eadward to the papal chair, may be considered his sending ecclesiastical delegates to the council holden by pope Leo at Rheims,² a step which was not regarded without feelings of mistrust by the independent Anglo-Saxon church. Even in temporal matters Eadward's partiality towards the notions and customs of the Catholic continent began to show its influence. Not so indif-

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1066. Fl. W. a. 1065, Dec. 28th. Ailr. Rieval. ap. Twysden, p. 379 sq. Albericus, a. 1053.

² Sax. Chron. a. 1049, Hist. Rames. c. 114, where for 'Ædwino' read 'Eadwardo.'

ferent as it now appears to us was the affixing of a pendant seal to his charters,¹ in imitation of the Frankish kings, and his endeavour to substitute in place of the Anglo-Saxon handwriting the lighter French hand, in use among the foreign clerks in his service. Even the chancellor of the king was a Norman named Hugolin;² ecclesiastics of the French school found quicker promotion than the natives, and influenced the decisions of the judge; and with the garb the spirit also of Norman institutions was easily introduced.

The nation, nevertheless, would hardly have noticed these innovations, and would probably have endured the gradual installation of foreign prelates, had not the powerful temporal lords of the land found themselves aggrieved by the strangers. Of these Radulf, a nephew of the king, who had attended him on his return from exile to England, had been (probably after the banishment of Sweyn) invested with the earldom of Hereford. Many French knights had also attached themselves to Radulf, and resided in his castles, and some had their own castles, as Osbern, surnamed Pentecost, and Hugo.³ Mention is also made of the

¹ See a representation of Eadward's seal in Palgrave's 'History of England,' p. 328, and in Taylor's 'Master Wace,' p. 86.—T.

² See the list in Du Chesne, *Scriptt. Norm.* p. 1023, and Maseres, *Hist. Angl. Select. Monum.* p. 367.

³ Sax. Chron. a. 1052. "Pentecostes castel." Fl. W. Du Chesne and Maseres, *ut sup.* Many of the younger ones were destined to act an important part in the later history of England, among whom may be mentioned Robert, who with his father, Humphrey of Telleuil, served the king, by whom he was knighted, till at the desire of the father, who longed for home, both returned to France loaded with presents. At a later period he assumed the name of his castle, Ruddhlan or Roelent. Order. Vital. p. 669 sq.

castle of another French knight, Robert—son of a noble lady named Wimarce—situated to the north of London.¹ The influence of Radulf was considered all-powerful at the court of Eadward: the weak courted his favour, and presumed not to withstand any of his pretensions; and even the influential abbot of Ramsey, prompted by the conviction of his power, was induced to surrender to him certain lands, the possession of which he coveted. The powerful looked on him only with ill-concealed rancour. The refusal of archbishop Robert to consecrate Spearhafoc to the see of London had just excited the minds of the people anew against the Franks, and they looked with jealousy on the marriage, which shortly after took place, between Goda, the sister of Eadward and mother of Radulf, and Eustace count of Boulogne, called from his large mustaches “Eustace aux Grenons,”² when the unwelcome intelligence of a fresh arrival of Frankish visitors became public, and was received with mistrust and murmuring. The king’s brother-in-law, Eustace, appeared at court with a stately retinue. On

¹ Guil. Pietav. p. 199. “Rodbertus, fil. Guimarcæ, nobilis mulieris,” is spoken of as a very rich Norman settled in the south of England, and a relation of duke William. In Domesday-Book he and his son Sweyn are often mentioned as possessors of large estates. The son built the castle of Rayleigh. This Robert is named in a charter of the Confessor to the abbey of Westminster, “Roberd, Wymarche sune, stallere.” See Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 489, and ii. p. 206. *Monast.* i. p. 298.

² Father by his subsequent marriage with Ida, sister of Godfrey, duke of Lorrain, of the celebrated Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin I., kings of Jerusalem. The Chronicle of Lanercost places his marriage with Goda in September 1051 (Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 384), confounding it probably with the visit of Eustace in that year. Such an object for his visit could not have been unknown to the A.-S. chroniclers, and Malmesbury (ii. 13) says expressly, “Edwardum regem, nescio qua de causa, adiit.”

his return, having stopped for refreshment at Canterbury, he proceeded on the way to Dover.¹ When within a mile or two of the town, it was observed that he and his men put on their hauberks, and no sooner had they arrived than they announced their intention to quarter themselves wherever it appeared agreeable to them. Against abuses in harbouring even the king and his followers, the townspeople could secure themselves; but to these Franks, who were regarded as a public nuisance, no one would act as host. One of them having wounded a householder, who resisted his attempt at entrance, was slain by the latter; whereupon Eustace and his followers mounted their horses and made a general attack on the inhabitants, in which the householder above mentioned and about twenty others were slain. Many of the French also fell by the hands of the townsmen, and many more were wounded. Eustace himself with a few of his people escaping with difficulty, went immediately to the king at Gloucester, who on hearing their version of what had taken place, in his anger despatched Godwine to punish the townsmen for their misconduct. But why should the proud and mighty earl, out of mere compliance with the will of his weak-minded son-in-law, be the instrument to punish his brave burghers for a deed which had called forth praise from every part of England, and thus degrade himself for the sake of the odious Franks? All the West Saxons shared in his hatred, for reckless

¹ I follow the narrative of the Saxon Chronicle, Malmesbury, etc. Florence, who wrote in the Norman times, is much less accurate, and relates that the following event took place on the landing of Eustace in September. [The second account given in the Chronicle agrees with Florence in stating the fray to have taken place on the landing, which it erroneously places in 1052.—T.]

insolence and rash violence had marked the career of every Frank in England. In the neighbourhood of one of their newly-built castles in Herefordshire, probably that of Pentecost, even the king's vassals were exposed to their insults and violence. Godwine hereupon, with his sons, Sweyn and Harold, resolved to lay their own and the nation's complaints before the king, who had appointed his witan to assemble at Gloucester about the second mass-day of St. Mary,¹ for the purpose of suppressing these dissensions. In the meantime Godwine and his sons had gathered around them at Beverston (Byferes-stan) and Langtree (Langatreo) a strong and well-appointed body of followers, by whose aid they would probably have been enabled to extort compliance with their demands; but Leofric, Siward and Radulf had also assembled their forces, and it required great consideration and wise mediators to withhold the opposed parties from a conflict, which threatened the destruction of some of the most influential men of the country. Godwine and his sons were unable to justify their conduct to the king, whose ear had been already forestalled by the foreigners: still less were they able to obtain their desire, that Eustace and his men, together with all the Frenchmen who were in the castle in Herefordshire,² should be delivered into their hands.

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1048. "Neh þære æftre Scā Marian mæssan ;" and, "vii nihton ær þære lateran Scē Maria mæssan : " i.e. seven days before the nativity of St. Mary, or the 1st of September.

² Such seems the meaning of the words of the Chronicle, "Eustatius and his men and eac þa Frencyscan þe ou ðan castelle wæron," which are rendered by Florence, "Eustatium et socios ejus, insuper et Normannos et Bononienses, qui castellum in Dorvernīæ clivo tenuerunt." Either Florence must have had before him a defective and unintelligible MS., or Eadward must already have entrusted the castle of Dover to the French, a supposition which

But threatening as the aspect of things was, Eadward succeeded for the moment in re-establishing tranquillity; hostages were mutually given, and the witan appointed to meet again at London on the autumnal equinox. On the arrival of Godwine and his sons with their thanes and a numerous army at Southwark, they found the king surrounded by a formidable host collected from the earldoms of Siward and Leofric and other parts. Disheartened by the aspect of affairs, the army of the earls rapidly decreased by desertion. By the witenagemot pledges were demanded from all the thanes of Harold; Sweyn was declared an outlaw, and Godwine and Harold were summoned to justify their conduct before the assembly. They demanded a safe-conduct from the king, and hostages for their security, but on his demand placed all their thanes at his disposal. Eadward now commanded them to appear with twelve of their followers before his council, for the purpose of defending themselves, when they again demanded hostages, which, though no doubt necessary for their safety, could not be granted without offence to the royal dignity, and were consequently refused, a safe-conduct only for five days being allowed them, within which

would account for the insolence of Eustace, but which is highly improbable. The opinion generally received, that Dover castle was first built by the Conqueror, though followed by Ellis (Introd. i. p. 223), appears to me erroneous. See also Hasted's Hist. of Kent, ix. p. 480. William of Poitiers describes the "*castrum Dovera*," in relating its surrender by the townsmen to duke William. [The same author says even more to the purpose, "*Hinc Doveram contendit . . . quod locus ille inexpugnabilis videbatur. At ejus propinquitate Angli perculsi, neque naturæ vel operis munimento, neque multitudini virorum confidunt. Situm est id castellum in rupe mari contigua*," etc.—T.]

time they were ordered to leave the country. Godwine hereupon with his wife Gytha, Tostig and his wife Judith, a daughter or niece of Baldwin count of Flanders,¹ Sweyn and Gyrth, withdrew by night to his estates of Bosham and Thorney,² in his native Sussex, whence, in a vessel hastily laden with as much gold, silver and other treasure as it would contain, they embarked for Flanders. Harold and his brother Leofwine fled to Bristol, where they found a ship that had been fitted out by Sweyn for his own use, on board of which they sailed towards Ireland. The king despatched bishop Ealdred with a force in pursuit of them, who, however, could not or would not overtake them, and they reached their destination in safety, where, under the protection of the Irish king,³ they passed the winter. But Eadward's Frankish counsellors appear not to have been satisfied with having overthrown their most powerful foes, and deprived him of his favourites; they also prevailed on him to separate from his wife Eadgyth, who, bereft of all her lands and treasures, was sent, attended by one female servant, to the abbey of Wherwell, and there committed to the custody of the abbess, a sister of Eadward.⁴ As another triumph won

¹ In the Sax. Chron. she is called "Baldwines mage," but more definitely in Florence, a. 1052, "filia," and Hist. de Eccles. Dunelm. lib. iii. c. 11. Albericus, a. 1060.

² This Thorney is in the Channel, and not to be confounded with the isle on which the abbey of Westminster was built. The Chronicle says, "he wende suð to Dornege."

³ Is Eadward or an Irish potentate the king here intended? The latter seems the more probable, it being very unlikely that the outlawed and persecuted Harold would have enjoyed the protection of Eadward in a country from which he was contriving a war against him.

⁴ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1051. W. Malm. ii. 13. By the contemporary biographer of Eadward (cited by Dr. Lingard from

by the Frankish papal party may be regarded the expulsion of Spearhafoc from the see of London, which was bestowed on the king's chaplain, the Norman William; Odda, also a Norman,¹ obtained the earldom over the counties of Devon, Somerset, Dorset, and Cornwall; while Harold's earldom in the east of England was conferred on Ælfgar, the son of Leofric.

Stowe), whose work is dedicated to Eadgyth herself, it is said that she was conducted to Wherwell with royal pomp, and assured that her confinement was only temporary and a measure of precaution.—T.

¹ That Odda or Otho was a Norman is not, to my knowledge, expressly said by any historian; but the donation made by him to the church of St. Mary at Rouen renders the supposition extremely probable. See Rotul. Liter. Claus. R. Johannis, p. 70. Malmesbury (ii. 13) calls him "*regis cognatum*." The list of Normans in England before the conquest (Du Chesne, p. 1023, Maseres, p. 367) names an "*Odo comes*," but adds, "*ante Eadwardi tempora in exiliu[m] ejectus*." But this list contains many errors which render it far from trustworthy. Harald, lord of Sudley, son of earl Ralh h, is rightly entered (see Ellis, Introd. i. p. 433, and ii. p. 141), but Ralph was the earl of Hereford before-mentioned, not, as the list has it, a later created earl of the East Angles.

CHAPTER XVII.

A.D. 1052-1066.

Continuation of Eadward the Confessor's Reign—William of Normandy—Civil War—Godwine's Return—His Death—Death of Eadward—War with Scotland and Wales—Intestine Troubles—Sack of Hereford—Godiva of Coventry—Tostig—Harold's Visit to Normandy—Insurrections—Tostig outlawed—Character of King Eadward.

BEFORE the conclusion of the year Eadward received a visit from William, duke of Normandy, attended by a numerous retinue, who, after a most honourable and hospitable reception, and having seen the king's villis and castles, returned home laden with costly presents.¹ This visit is the more important, as it may have excited in William's mind the idea of one day becoming master of the fair realm of his childless cousin; though the existence of such a thought at the time is positively denied by Ingulf, who became known to the duke during his stay in England, and accompanied him home in the capacity of private secretary. But Ingulf can hardly have known more than that between the two princes no actual agreement was entered into relative to the succession in favour of William; while the Norman writers maintain, though with little appearance of probability, that Eadward appointed William his successor, through the medium

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1052. Fl. W. a. 1051. Rom. de Rou, v. 10,539

of archbishop Robert, who was sent to Normandy on that occasion; and that even the son and grandson of Godwine were delivered to William as hostages.¹

The banishment of Godwine and his sons was connected with too many interests to be of long duration, and they neglected no means of securing for themselves a triumphant restoration. A short time before the occurrence of the above-mentioned events, a fleet of Irish pirates, consisting of thirty-six ships, entered the mouth of the Severn, and being aided by Griffith, king of South Wales, they crossed the Wye and ravaged the neighbouring country. Ealdred, bishop of Worcester, with a small body of forces, gathered from the shires of Gloucester and Hereford, went out against them; but some Welsh among his men, in violation of the oath of fidelity which they had taken, sent private intelligence to Griffith, advising him to make an immediate attack on the English. In pursuance of this counsel, Griffith together with the Irish rushed on the little army of Ealdred at the dawn of day, slew many of his men, and put the rest with the bishop to flight.²

It was probably in concert with Godwine and his sons that Griffith again invaded the English territory, and laid waste the greater part of Herefordshire. In the neighbourhood of Leominster he was encountered by the people of the country, aided by the Normans from the castle, whom, after a considerable loss on both sides, he overcame, and returned with much booty to his own country. Harold and Leofwine now sailed with a considerable fleet from Ireland and entered the

¹ Guil. Pictav. p. 181. See Maseres, p. 74 sq.

² Sax. Chron. v. 1050. Fl. W. a. 1049.

mouth of the Severn, where they landed, and plundered many towns and villages in the counties of Somerset and Devon. In an engagement between their forces and the people of the country, the latter were defeated with great loss, including above thirty thanes. Harold then sailed round the Land's End into the British Channel. Eadward and his witan now deemed it time to adopt measures for the security of his people, and caused a fleet of forty ships to be fitted out under the command of the earls Odda and Radulf, which was, during many weeks, stationed at Sandwich, for the purpose of watching the movements of Godwine. A day or two before midsummer Godwine proceeded from Bruges to his ships, which were lying in the Yser, below Nieuport, whence he sailed to the coast of England, and arrived at a point a little to the south of Romney. Here he found all the people devoted to him: the sailors (*butse-carlas*) of Hastings, the men of Sussex, Surrey and Essex declaring themselves ready to live or die for him. The royal fleet had in the meanwhile sailed in quest of him, but, after a fruitless cruise, returned to its station at Sandwich, and thence sailed to London. It was now resolved to place the royal fleet under abler commanders, but, during the delay which attended the execution of this resolution, the seamen returned to their homes. The state of embarrassment into which his opponents were naturally plunged by these untoward occurrences could not be unknown to Godwine, whose next visit was to the fertile Isle of Wight, whence having supplied his fleet with provisions, he sailed to Portland. Here he was joined by his sons Harold and Leofwine. With their united fleets they now proceeded along the coast eastwards, limiting their demands, wherever they met with

no hostile opposition, to the supplies necessary for their forces, enticing the people, both landsmen and sailors, into their service, and seizing on all the ships which lay at Romney, Hythe and Folkestone. At Dover also and Sandwich they seized on the ships and received hostages and supplies, and thence directed their course up the Thames towards London, till they arrived at Southwark, where, while waiting for the flood-tide, Godwine treated with the townspeople, who were all favourably disposed towards him. Then passing through the bridge, he arrayed both his land and sea forces along the southern bank of the river, inclining his ships towards the opposite shore, as if he would hem in the royal fleet, which consisted of fifty ships under Eadward and his earls, who had, moreover, a considerable land army, but all of whom were ill-disposed to fight against their own countrymen, for the sake of the foreign favourites. Godwine and his party now demanded the restoration of their possessions and honours, which Eadward at first sternly refused; but at length, finding that his people were excited against him, and through the interposition of Stigand, bishop of Winchester, with other prudent counsellors, it was settled that hostages should be mutually given. On receiving this intelligence, the Frenchmen immediately mounted their horses and fled, some to Osbern Pente-cost's castle, others northwards to earl Robert's; while Robert the archbishop, William, bishop of London, and Ulf, bishop of Dorchester, with many followers, escaped out at the east gate, and, injuring many in their flight, proceeded to the coast, where, at Eadulf's-ness, they threw themselves into a crazy boat and reached the shores of Normandy, leaving behind the archiepiscopal

pall and other valuables.¹ Bishop William was, on account of his excellent character, afterwards recalled and reinstated in his diocese. Pentecost and Hugo, having surrendered their castles, received permission from Leofric to pass through his earldom on their way to Scotland, where they entered into the service of Macbeth. But archbishop Robert proved a dangerous foe to the Anglo-Saxons: he hurried to Rome for the purpose of preferring bitter complaints, on account of his deposition, but more particularly against his successor Stigand; and an appearance of right on his side was not without a prejudicial influence on subsequent transactions, though it operated most unfavourably for the Anglo-Saxons in having cherished, if it did not inspire, the thought in William of Normandy of securing the succession to the throne of England.² At a great witenagemot holden without the gate of London, Godwine, as a matter of course, fully succeeded in establishing his own and his sons' innocence of all that had been charged against them, whereupon they were received again into the king's full friendship, and restored to their possessions and honours. Queen Eadgyth was also reinstated in her former station. Of Sweyn we are informed that he died on his return from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which he had undertaken as an atonement for the murder of his cousin Björn.³ The Frenchmen, including archbishop Robert,—both

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1052. Whether it was the east gate of London or Canterbury seems doubtful.—T.

² W. Malm. ii. 13. ejd. De Pont. i.

³ Sax. Chron. a. 1052, [where it is said that he died at Constantinople. Florence is more circumstantial: "Ille ductus penitentia, eo quod consobrinum suum Beornum occiderat, de Flandria nudis pedibus Hierusalem jam adierat, indeque rediens, invaliditudine ex

ecclesiastics and laymen,—were outlawed, because they had introduced odious measures and widened the breach between the king and the family of Godwine. A few exceptions were made in favour of some relations of the king, as earl Radulf, Robert son of Wimarce, and a few employed about the king's person, of approved fidelity, as Robert the deacon, and his son-in-law Richard, son of Scrob, a knight on the Welsh marches. Alfred the king's groom of the stable, Anfrid, surnamed Cock'sfoot (*Ceoces-fot*), and some others to whom the king was attached.² Thus was a complete reconciliation effected, and the universal joy of the people must have convinced the king that his weak partiality for Norman courtiers, and Norman customs and manners, might inflict irreparable injury on his kingdom.

Unquestionably in this instance the strong feeling, of the nation proved a better guide than the weak discernment of a monarch with thoughts constantly bent on one illusory object. Oppressive as the yoke of the Northmen had been to the Anglo-Saxons, yet these people both in manners and language were nearly allied to them, and the difference of descent was not so great, that it might not be forgotten in the community

nimio frigore contracta, mortuus est in Lycia." So also R. Wendover, t. i. p. 491. Malmesbury says he was slain by the Saracens.—T.]

¹ Richard, the son of Scrob, as well as Richard's son Osbern, held lands under king Eadward in the counties of Hereford, Worcester and Salop. See Ellis, *Introd.* i. pp. 406, 485; ii. pp. 193, 206.

² The number of French settled in England cannot have been so inconsiderable as it would appear from the chronicles, since William the Conqueror deemed it necessary, with regard to taxation, to place them on an equal footing with the English. See *Laws of William*, iii. 4, in *Anc. LL. and Inst.*

of other relations and of the civilization of the Anglo-Saxons, which (as the more rugged people always become subordinate to those more cultivated) had extended itself to the Anglo-Danes. With the Normans it was far otherwise. These, though of Scandinavian origin, had long been estranged from their Northern kinsmen, and had assumed the habits and manners of their subjugated Southern neighbours. Instead of the Normans in France, they might have been more justly designated the French in Normandy. They had adopted and cultivated the Romance tongue, differing in dialect only from that of southern France: their manners and institutions were French; thirst after wandering and conquest had alone remained of their old characteristics, had spread the glory of their arms over the whole of Christendom, and transformed the most barbarous of pirates into lords and princes of the fairest lands of Roman Europe. For the Anglo-Saxons Normandy was not only the nearest point of contact with the Roman commonwealth, but also the boundary of the ever-increasing power of the papacy. With well-founded suspicion, therefore, might the king's Frankish friends be regarded as emissaries and spies of the mighty modern Rome. The piety of Eadward the Confessor was hardly less dangerous to his country than had been Cæsar's military and Gregory's spiritual conquest, which in some degree it may be said to have continued. As temporal interests had gained a preponderance at Rome, the least evil which the Anglo-Saxons had to fear was, that England might become a spiritual prey to the Roman system, as well as a secular conquest for the rapacious papal court. The greater evil, subjection to the dukes of Normandy, must be accompanied by the other. The civil war

with Godwine, therefore, though unattended with much bloodshed, may be considered as highly important on account of the views developed in it. As Eadward gave the first example of a morbid predilection for Frankish manners and language, so pernicious to modern Europe, in like manner we behold in the resistance of the Anglo-Saxons and their adherence to Godwine a nationality powerfully bursting forth (for the first time perhaps in such a manner during the middle ages), not yet, indeed, against foreign armies, but against an opposite mental direction. Would that they could always have preserved the British Channel as their boundary ; much domestic calamity might then have been spared, the most important national literature of the time escaped suppression, and an uninterrupted affinity would to our incalculable profit have connected the soul, the language and the knowledge of the ancient world with the present.

It may be regarded as a great misfortune for England that soon after the restoration of tranquillity Godwine died. He had laboured long and zealously, and felt that the close of his day was at hand. His indisposition had been remarked in the preceding year,¹ and he had retired to his earldom. On the second day of the Easter festival, while sitting at table with the king at Winchester, he was seized with a fit of apoplexy, and fell speechless to the ground. By his sons, Harold and Tostig, he was borne from the apartment, and on the fifth day expired in great agony. By the Norman writers, those deadly enemies of the house of Godwine, the tale was propagated, that one of the royal cupbearers, while in the act of presenting wine, happening to make a false step, saved himself

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1052.

from falling with the aid of the other foot, whereupon Godwine exclaimed, "Thus brother helps brother." "Yes," said the king looking on him sternly, "and had Ælfred lived he might so have helped me." Feeling himself called upon to assert his innocence of the murder of Ælfred, Godwine answered, "I know that you suspect me of your brother's murder, but may God, who is true and just, not permit this morsel of bread to enter my throat without choking me, if your brother suffered death or injury from me or by my counsel." Having said this the king blessed the bread which, on Godwine putting it into his mouth, instantly choked him.¹ Thus did Providence expose and punish the traitor and murderer. This story seems to be the last attempt of the Norman party to avenge themselves on the lion's skin of their deadliest enemy.² Trustworthy and circumstantial accounts of Godwine's personal character are wholly wanting; the authors who wrote a few years after his death being all in the interest of the Normans or inoculated with their views. So intense was their hatred of him that they could not acknowledge one of his merits; while, on the other hand, the Anglo-Saxons would have borne and forgotten his failings, could they have had him again to lead them to victory over their Norman oppressors. His parsimony towards churches that had been pampered by other nobles has undoubtedly contributed to deprive him of his due meed of praise.³ Eloquence in

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1053, 15th April.

² The first part of the story reminds us of the one told of Æthelstan while the latter part first appears in Ingulf, who was at that time living with duke William; also in Alfred of Beverley, and in Ailred of Rievaulx, page 395, writers of very little authority.

³ Sax. Chron. a. 1052

the national assemblies, activity and skill in public affairs, were the qualities acknowledged in Godwine, and these mainly contributed to his advancement, though it was the iron arms of the warrior which, under Cnut, first carved out the fame of the son of the "child of Sussex." His greatest glory is, that his interests were in general closely combined with those of his countrymen.

After the death of Godwine the earldom of Wessex was conferred on his eldest son Harold, while the latter's earldom was given to Ælfgar, the son of earl Leofric. At this time Eadward was anxiously busied in securing for his natural heirs the succession to the throne. In pursuance of this object he sent Ealdred, bishop of Worcester, to Cologne,¹ to the emperor Henry the Third, who was residing on the Lower Rhine, for the purpose of attending the consecration of his son at Aix-la-Chapelle as king of Germany. Ealdred, who found a cordial welcome both from the emperor and the archbishop Hermann, availed himself of the confidence of the latter in promoting the wish of Eadward for bringing back to England from Hungary, Eadward the son of Eadmund Ironside, who had married a niece of the emperor.² The execution of this plan was probably delayed by the war which just then broke out between Henry and king Andrew of Hungary, as well as by the death of the latter, and shortly after, by that of the emperor; but at length, to the great joy of the people, the son of Ironside arrived in England, accompanied by his wife, Agatha, and his children, Eadgar ætheling, Margaretha and Christina. Before, however, he could see his royal uncle, from

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1054.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1054. R. Wendover, t. i. p. 496.

whose presence an unfriendly faction, probably the partisans of Harold, had succeeded in excluding him, Eadward died suddenly in London.¹ Could his death, at such a moment and under such circumstances, have been laid with any appearance of probability to the charge of Harold, who was so great a gainer by it, it would hardly have been passed over without animadversion by the enemies of the future king; and we can only behold in it one of those far from rare unfortunate events, which should teach nations as well as individuals not too lightly to attach the weight of their destiny and their hopes of happiness to one solitary weak thread of life.

The restoration of internal order was soon productive of beneficial consequences with regard to foreign relations. Macbeth, who in the year 1039 had murdered the benevolent king Duncan near Elgin, was, on account perhaps of homage neglected or refused, in a state of hostility against England. With Macbeth the Norman fugitives, Osbern and Hugo, as well as their followers, had, as we have seen, found an asylum. Scots and Normans fought side by side against the Northumbrian earl Siward (a chieftain whose gigantic stature and steadfastness of purpose remind us of the heroes of the ancient world), who, at the command of Eadward, had with a numerous army, consisting chiefly of cavalry, and a fleet, attacked the usurper in his kingdom. In a battle fought at Lanfanan in Aberdeenshire, many thousands of the Scots and all the Normans were slain; on the side of the victors also the loss was extremely severe, including Osbern the son of Siward, and Siward his nephew and namesake. When informed of the death of his son, he

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1057.

only inquired whether his death-wound was in the front or back, and on learning that it was in the front, "I heartily rejoice," said he, "for I deem no other death worthy of me or my son."¹ Malcolm Ceanmore, the son of Duncan, who had till then held the crown of Cumberland, was now invested with Scotland as a fief under king Eadward.

Siward did not long survive this glorious achievement. He fell sick soon after the re-establishment of peace, and saw the moment approach which he had ever looked on with contempt. "I feel shame," said he, "not to have fallen in one of so many battles, and to have been preserved to die like a cow. Case me at least in my mail of proof, gird on my sword, lift on my helmet, place a shield in my left hand, and a gilded axe in my right, that I may die like a valiant soldier as I am."² When thus accoutred he breathed his last. Siward's remaining son Waltheof, not having yet reached the age of maturity, the vacant earldom was conferred by the king on Tostig, the brother of Harold.

The reputation of Harold rose rapidly in his present station, through the talents as well as the good feeling which he manifested in his exalted position, but more particularly through the war so ably conducted by him on the western frontier of the kingdom. It was a measure of the most urgent necessity to oppose a powerful resistance to the South Welsh who had poured down from their mountains into the English plain. Harold overcame their hordes, which had penetrated as far as Gloucester, and caused the head of Rys, one of

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1054. Sim. Dunelm. H. Hunt.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1055. H. Hunt. lib. vi. R. de Diceto, 477. Auctor de Comit. Huntend. et Northampt.

their leaders, a brother of king Griffith, the son of Ryderch, to be stricken off, and set over the gates of the above-mentioned city.¹ But in the same year, the Welsh took bloody vengeance on the earldom of Leofric, where they attacked and slaughtered many of the garrison at Westbury.²

A quarrel now took place between the two most powerful families in England, the sons of Godwine and Leofric, by which only their hostile neighbours were the gainers. Harold contrived to render Ælfgar suspected by the king of treason against his person and kingdom, and by a witena-gemot holden at London, Ælfgar was sentenced to banishment, although the charge preferred against him consisted merely in an excusable piece of rashness.³ Thus against his will was Ælfgar made a rebellious traitor, and, following the example set him by Harold, he went to Ireland, where he added eighteen ships to those he already possessed, with which he proceeded to Wales. With this not inconsiderable power he entered into a league with Griffith, the son of Llewellyn, king of Gwynedd, and, since the assassination of the equivocal king of Dimetia, sovereign of all Wales,⁴ whose warriors with their Irish auxiliaries⁵ made a hostile inroad into Herefordshire.

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1053. Annal. Camb. a. 1023, 1033. Brut y Tyw. a. 1043.

² Sax. Chron. a. 1053.

³ Sax. Chron. a. 1055.

⁴ Annal. Camb. aa. 1023, 1039, 1046, 1055.

⁵ Ingulf, a. 1056, says, "Edwardus, ductus pravo consilio quorundam, Algarum exlegavit, sed auxilio Griffini et *Noricæ classis*, quæ sibi *venerat exinsperato*," etc., where the mention of the Norwegian fleet seems interpolated from the narrative, a. 1058, "Algarus secundo exlegatus est, qui Griffinum iterum adiens et *classem Noricam conducens* per vim suum comitatum recuperavit." See Sax. Chron., Fl. W. a. 1058, who uses nearly the same words, "Norregeanicæ classis adminiculo, quæ ad illum venerat ex impro-

Against these earl Radulf assembled an army, with which he encountered them two miles from Hereford. With the view apparently of assimilating the English forces to his Normans, Radulf had ordered them to fight, contrary to their custom, on horseback. At the beginning of the conflict the earl with his Norman and French followers took to flight, and their example was speedily imitated by the mounted English, of whom between four and five hundred were slain by the pursuing enemy, and a considerable number wounded. After their victory, Griffith and Ælfgar entered the city of Hereford, which they burnt, sparing neither the cathedral nor the abbey, in which were deposited the bones of Offa's victim, the unfortunate youthful Æthelberht of East Anglia. Many of the citizens also were slain, and many led into captivity by the victors, who returned to Wales laden with booty.¹ An army was now gathered together at Gloucester from all parts of the kingdom, under the command of Harold, who immediately went in pursuit of Griffith and Ælfgar, and pitched his camp within the Welsh territory. Griffith and Ælfgar, who well knew the adversary with whom they had now to contend, withdrew into South Wales; whereupon Harold, leaving a considerable part of his army behind, returned with the rest to Hereford, which he fortified with a broad and lofty rampart and gates. In the meanwhile a negotiation was set on

viso;" though the Annal. Camb. a. 1056 also relate that "Magnus (afterwards king of Norway), filius Harald (Haradrada), vastavit regionem Anglorum auxiliante Grifino rege Britonum." See also Brut y Tyw. h. a. In Wynne's Caradoc, instead of Magnus, Roderic, son of the Danish king Harald, is named.

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1055.

foot through messengers, which led to a meeting between the hostile chieftains at Billingsley, and ended in a treaty of peace and friendship; whereupon Ælfgar's fleet sailed to Chester, there to await the stipend due to them, while Ælfgar himself proceeded to the court of Eadward, by whom he was re-instated in his earldom.

In the following year¹ the restless Welsh renewed their ravages in England. Leofgar, the newly-appointed bishop of Hereford, one of the warlike prelates of the early middle ages, forsaking his ghostly weapons for spear and sword, took the field against Griffith, but in an unfortunate conflict at Clafftburh² was slain with many of his priests, besides Ælfnoth the sheriff and a considerable number of the common people; the rest betook themselves to flight. This petty warfare occurred at midsummer, when, in consequence of the extreme heat, the loss to the English army, both in men and horses, was most severe. At this juncture the earls Harold and Leofric, accompanied by Ealdred, bishop of Worcester, arrived at the army, and through them a peace was again concluded with Griffith, who engaged on oath to be thenceforth a faithful vassal to king Eadward.

England now appeared perfectly tranquillised, when, soon after the death of the ætheling Eadward the Outlaw, Leofric, the powerful earl of Coventry (Mercia), died. Valour, and the liberal application of their riches by him and his consort Godiva (Godgyfu) for the benefit of the ecclesiastic foundations of the citizens of Coventry and other inhabitants of the earldom, have

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1056.

² Perhaps Cleobury, the Claiberic of Domesday.—T.

made of both an abundant subject of English popular story,¹ the genuineness of which has often and, perhaps, gratuitously been called in question. This tale need hardly be regarded as void of all historical ground when we remember the numerous strange and seemingly incredible, yet well authenticated, forms of oath, and almost ludicrous modes of performing feudal service common in that age. We are scarcely, therefore, justified in rejecting the account that has come down to us in connection with the grant of the civil rights of Coventry, in accordance with which, Godiva, the wife of the Earl, prayed her husband, in honour of the Mother of God, the protectress of Coventry, to free that city from the many burdens under which it groaned; and when he would only grant her prayer on a humiliating, and, therefore, apparently impossible condition, the lady resolved to submit in order that she might obtain this good end. Letting her long hair fall around her, which clothed her as with an almost impenetrable garment, she rode in all honour and modesty to the cathedral, and thus won the desired freedom for the grateful citizens.

Ælfgar succeeded his father in the earldom of Mercia, while his earldom of East Anglia was divided among the younger sons of the great families, of whom Gyrth, the son of Godwine, received Suffolk. For reasons with which we are unacquainted, Ælfgar was, in the following year, driven a second time into banishment. He again fled to the Welsh, and with Griffith's aid recovered possession of his earldom, in which enterprise he received unexpected support from a fleet of Norwegians,² who had visited the English

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1057. Matt. Westmon. W. Malm. R. Wendover, i. p. 497. Bromton, p. 949.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1058.

shores to avenge themselves on Eadward for the help he had given their enemy, Svend of Denmark. The feeble-minded king seems to have tamely acquiesced in this act of rebellion, and the factions now ceasing from further strife, England enjoyed another short period of tranquillity. Ealdred, bishop of Worcester, the friend of Godwine, was at this time, on the death of Cynesige, raised to the see of York, while bishoprics were also bestowed on the chaplains of the king and other foreigners.

On his journey to Rome, for the purpose of receiving his pall, Ealdred was accompanied by earl Tostig,¹ who, having quelled his enemies on the Scottish frontier, resolved with his consort to undertake a pilgrimage to the holy city. By the sovereign pontiff, Nicolas the Second, Tostig was received with marked distinction, but to Ealdred the pall was refused, on account of a charge of simony and insufficiency of learning. On their return they fell in with robbers, by whom they were deprived of everything but their garments, a fortunate event for Ealdred, who now obtained his pall on Tostig threatening to prevail on Eadward to stop the payment of St. Peter's penny to a pontiff who, while he tyrannized over suppliants, was powerless against a gang of robbers. Tostig's earldom was, however, in the meanwhile, notwithstanding his fancied security, attacked and laid waste by Malcolm of Scotland.²

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1061. From these authorities we learn that Ealdred had already made a pilgrimage with unparalleled splendour to Jerusalem, and offered at the holy sepulchre a golden chalice of five marks and of wonderful workmanship.—T.

² Malmesb. de Pont. lib. iii. Sim. Dunelm. a. 1061. G. Gaimar, v. 5099 sq.

The death of Ælfgar, in whose place we find his son Eadwine, and a new war between Harold and Griffith of Wales, who had become the son-in-law of Ælfgar,¹ are events probably not unconnected with each other. In the beginning of the year 1063 the king resided at Gloucester, when the audacity of the Welsh again prompted him to transgress their boundary. Harold was now convinced that the mere act of driving these troublesome neighbours back into their own territory was no security against a recurrence of hostilities, and that the method of warfare which he had hitherto adopted afforded him no brilliant results against a people rapid in their movements, and inaccessible among the defiles of their mountains and forests. In pursuance, therefore, of his design for the permanent subjugation of his restless enemy, Harold inured a portion of his men to the sparing diet of the Welsh, armed them with light spears, leathern corselets and helmets, and leaving the greater part of his cavalry behind, at the head of these light-armed troops he indefatigably followed the Welsh, who were unused to oppose similar virtues to intense earnestness of purpose and perseverance. The Welsh fled in all directions, and were pursued into the defiles and recesses of Snowdon. Griffith himself, escaping from the hands of his pursuers, took refuge in a ship. Harold, however, having caused the palace of the Welsh prince at Ruddlan and his ships to be burnt, proceeded to his fleet at Bristol, and sailed round the greater part of Wales, while Tostig from the north, with his cavalry, traversed the eastern part of the country. Wherever Harold gained a victory, a lofty column was erected with this inscription, "Here Harold conquered";

¹ Guil. Gemet. lib. vii. c. 31.

though the result of the war bears more unequivocal witness to the triumphs of Harold than the boastful column. The Welsh now deposed and banished their valiant prince, gave hostages to Eadward, and promised to pay the accustomed tribute. Not only of those bearing arms, but even of boys, so many had during this war fallen by the sword, that a want of men in Wales soon became manifest, and marriages between Welsh women and English men, which till then had very rarely been permitted, were now allowed by the king. This measure which, had it been earlier and universally adopted, might have exercised a benign influence over two nations unfortunately separated by race and language, now only brought a few Welsh females to England, while the mountain people have persisted in their most prominent characteristics. According to an ordinance of Harold, every Welshman, who appeared with arms on this side of Offa's dyke, was liable to have his right hand cut off. In the following year the unfortunate Griffith was murdered by his rebellious subjects, and his head, together with the beak of his ship, sent to the proud victor, who laid them at the feet of the king.¹ Two half-brothers of Griffith, Blethgerent and Rythwallon, were now invested by Eadward with the territory of their murdered relative, to whom, and also to Harold, they took oaths of fealty; from which circumstance it would appear that Harold's earldom comprised North Wales, as Odda's did the principality of Cornwall. In South Wales unquenched courage and hatred to the English still prevailed, and showed itself when Harold caused

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1063. Fl. W. aa. 1063, 1064. Girald. Camb. de Illaudab. Wallie, c. vii. ap. Wharton, A. S. Joh. Sarisb. de Nugis Curial. lib. vi. c. 6.

a hunting-seat to be erected for the king at Portskeweth in Monmouthshire,¹ which was levelled to the ground by Cradoc, the son of Griffith, prince of South Wales, who had been slain ten years before by Griffith of North Wales: almost all the men employed on the building were put to the sword.

Harold was probably about this time in Normandy, a fact which, as the peculiar circumstances attending it are no longer to be ascertained—whatever may have been written concerning it in later times—may be pronounced one of the most contested in English history. That this was the point of time is merely probable,² and is, indeed, a matter of indifference. Harold, it is said, left his family seat at Bosham on a visit to duke William, the brother-in-law of his brother Tostig,³ the object of which was to induce that prince to restore to their liberty his brother Wulfnoth, and Hakon, the son of his brother Sweyn, who had been delivered by Godwine as hostages to Eadward for the good conduct of himself and sons, and, for greater security, and as a guarantee for his succession, had by the king been sent to the duke.⁴ Eadward is said to have

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1065.

² According to Wace (*v.* 10,729, the journey to Normandy took place immediately after the death of Godwine. The strictly Anglo-Saxon authorities are silent on the subject, as well as respecting Eadward's bequest of the inheritance to William.

³ Their wives, Judith and the duchess Mathilda, were daughters of Baldwin, count of Flanders. According to some accounts Harold's intended destination was Flanders; to others, he went out for pleasure and was driven on the coast of Ponthieu. See II. Hunt., who places the event in the twenty-second year of Eadward's reign. See also W. Malm. Snorre, Harald Hardráda's Saga, c. 78.

⁴ Guil. Pictav. Eadmeri Hist. Novor. lib. i. Roman de Rou, *v.* 10,557 sq. and *v.* 10,687 sq. Fl. W. a. 1087. It is singular that

given him, at the same time, the commission of confirming to William the assurance that he had appointed him as his successor on the throne of England. Such, according to the Norman accounts, was the message that Harold was charged to present to duke William,¹ together with a sword and a ring from Eadward;² when, on his passage from England, he was driven by a storm on the coast of Ponthieu, made prisoner by Guy, the count of that territory, according, to the barbarous strand-law then prevailing, imprisoned in the castle of Beaurain, and liberated by the powerful intervention of duke William. Count Guy, who delivered his prisoner into the hands of William at Eu, was rewarded for his compliance with large donations, both in land and money. At Rouen Harold was honourably entertained by his politic host and rival, who expressed, and, no doubt, with sincerity, his joy in a guest so distinguished, and, at the same time, the envoy of his friend and relative, and in whom he hoped to find a faithful mediator between himself and the English nation. He also accompanied the duke to many tournaments, and on three or four expeditions against Conan, duke of Brittany, where his valour and courtly demeanour excited the admiration of the Normans. Before an assembly of the states, convened at

neither William of Jumièges nor Ordericus Vitalis makes mention of the hostages. Hemingford calls the son of Sweyn, Otherin.

¹ Guil. Pictav. *Roman de Rou*, v. 10,727 sq. Guil. Gemet. vii. c. 31. Not so Eadmer, according to whom (what Wace also states) the king warned Harold not to go to William.

² *So Carmen de Bello Hastingsensi*, v. 295.

“Annulus est illi testis concessus, et ensis,
Quæ per te nosti missa fuisse sibi.”

Bonneville,¹ Harold, no longer master of his actions, not only took an oath of fealty to William, but, according to the testimony of persons present, swore to be William's representative at the court of Eadward, to strive with all his power to secure for him the succession to the English throne, and to deliver the castle of Dover with its well, and other castles in his earldom to the custody of Norman soldiers.² Harold hereupon—having received the duke's assurance that he would continue him in the possession of all his patrimony and power, and that he would give him Adeliza, one of his daughters, in marriage, and bestow the hand of his sister on a Norman nobleman, release Hakon immediately, and Wulfnoth on his accession to the throne³—departed for England laden with presents. Eadward heard with sorrow the intelligence of what had passed in Normandy.⁴

¹ Guil. Pictav., but Bayeux, according to Wace.

² To increase the sanctity of Harold's oath, and, consequently, aggravate the crime of perjury, should he violate it, William, we are told, caused him to swear on the relics of those saints that were held in the highest veneration by the Normans. It is even said that William had them clandestinely brought in a tub, and covered with a pall, over which Harold, in ignorance of the holy things it contained, took the oath. See R. Hoveden. *Roman de Rou*, v. 10,824, and Maseres' note ut sup.—T.

³ Such is Eadmer's account, which bears in general traces of veracity. It is adopted by Simeon of Durham, a. 1066; Peter Langtoft (*Rob. de Brunne*) also follows a similar narrative. According to William of Jumièges (vii. 31), William offered to give Harold with his daughter half the kingdom. Harold's betrothment to Adeliza is not mentioned by William of Poitiers. Ordericus Vitalis (p. 492) even mentions it as one of Harold's falsehoods with which he deceived king Eadward; but (p. 573) speaks of another daughter, Agatha, as having been betrothed to Harold.

⁴ R. Hoveden. Guil. Gemet. and Maseres, *Selecta Monum.* p. 118, *note*. Harold's visit to Normandy, together with the subsequent occurrences between him and William, form the subject of the re-

If Eadward, as William maintained, had really sent hostages to him as a guarantee for his succession to the throne, such a commission as that assigned to Harold is at any rate conceivable; but William's pretensions were of the most frivolous description, being derived merely from Emma, as sister of his grandfather, a relationship which, not to mention his illegitimacy, could give him no hereditary claim on England. Equally groundless were the claims of Harold to a

presentations on that precious and unique monument, the Bayeux Tapestry, embroidered by Matilda, the wife of the Conqueror, or her namesake, the queen of Henry I., or her daughter of the same name. This wonderful piece of work, called "*La toilette du duc Guillaume*," is 229 English feet in length and 19 inches wide, representing in 58 sections the conquest of England by William. It was formerly kept in the cathedral, but is now in the Hôtel de Ville at Bayeux, and is every year exhibited in the cathedral. It has been amply described and illustrated, first by Montfaucon, '*Monuments de la Monarchie française*,' tt. i. ii., then by Lancelot in the '*Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*,' etc., t. ix. p. 535 (reprinted in Thierry, '*Histoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre*,' t. i. p. 364 sq.), Ducarel, '*Anglo-Norman Antiquities*,' and De la Rue, '*Recherches sur l'Histoire de la Normandie*.' In essentials this tapestry accords with the Roman de Rou, and the one may not have been without influence on the other. Turner and Thierry seem to have been somewhat too lavish in their use of this monument, forgetting that an historical illustration of a work of art will not alone suffice to stamp it with the character of an historical authority. The papers of Messrs. Gurney, Amyot and Stothard in the *Archæologia*, voll. xviii. xix., declare (against the opinion of the abbé de la Rue) for the higher antiquity of the tapestry. On the names occurring on it of Wadard, Turolde and Vital, liegemen of the bishop of Bayeux, see Ellis, *Introd. to Domesd.* and vol. ii. p. 404. [One of the most exact representations of the tapestry is that by the late Mr. Stothard, executed for the Society of Antiquaries, and contained in the '*Monumenta Vetusta*.' See also Dr. Dibdin's *Tour*, and '*Master Wace, his Chronicle of the Norman Conquest*,' by Edgar Taylor, Esq., F.S.A.—T.] It has, however, more recently been reproduced in facsimile by the aid of photography.—E. C. O.

crown, in the bestowing of which the choice of the witan was restricted to the nearest fitting or worthy individual of the royal house. Now the nearest claimant was unquestionably the young ætheling Eadgar, the grandson of Eadmund Ironside: it appears, therefore, in the highest degree improbable that the king, who had called the lawful heir and his son from Hungary to the land of his fathers, should have bound himself to bequeath his crown to William; though, while a fugitive at the Norman court, he might have suffered expressions to escape him, of which the duke may craftily have availed himself in his intercourse with Harold.

The dangers which threatened the future appeared still more formidable in consequence of an event fraught with evil which took place about this time. Tostig, although the son of a Danish mother, yet, as a West Saxon, had found no welcome in his province. He had, moreover, illegally levied a tax on his subjects, for the support of his hired men or hus-carls, and for the purpose of defraying his vast expenses, which had been greatly increased by the extension of his dominion and the princely connections into which he had entered; while at the same time he neglected to provide for the security of his country, which during his pilgrimage had been ravaged by Malcolm of Scotland, in defiance of his oaths of friendship and fraternity.¹ For the maintenance of his power, Tostig had recourse to the most atrocious measures. At his instigation, but through the instrumentality of his sister, queen Eadgyth, Gospatric, a noble thane of Northumbria, was treacherously murdered in the royal court, and

¹ Sim. Dunelm. aa. 1059, 1061.

Gamel,¹ the son of Orm, together with Ulf, the son of Dolfin, was assassinated in his own chamber at York.² Soon after the feast of St. Michael, while Tostig was with the king at Bryford, two hundred Northumbrians, led by Gamelbearn,³ Dunstan, the son of Æthelnoth, and Glonieorn,⁴ the son of Heardulf, attacked the huscarls of the earl, who fled before them. On the same day two captains, Amund and Ravenswart (Reafanswart), were overtaken in their flight, and put to death without the walls of York, and on the day following above two hundred retainers of the court of Tostig, both Danes and English, were slaughtered on the north bank of the Humber. Tostig's treasures and arms became the prey of the insurgents, and in an assembly of the thanes of the country holden at York, he and all his pernicious counsellors were declared outlaws, and Morkere, the son of Ælfgar, was chosen to be their earl in his stead. Morkere, who did not decline the appointment, proceeded with the men of the shire and those of the shires of Lincoln, Nottingham and Derby to Northampton, where he was joined by his brother Eadwine and many Welsh. At Oxford they were met by Harold,⁵ who, perceiving that the cause of his brother was hopeless, and for the sake of the public tranquillity, undertook to accompany and support the petition of their delegates to the king, that he would confirm the nomination of Morkere. On this occasion

¹ Perhaps the vast land-owner whose name so frequently occurs in Domesday-book, among the holders T. R. E. (*Tempore Regis Edwardi*).

² Fl. W. a. 1065.

³ Perhaps the Gamelbar of Domesday, a holder in Yorkshire, T. R. E.

⁴ Possibly Glunier, a holder in Yorkshire, T. R. E.

⁵ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1065, Oct. 28th.

Harold, it is possible, may have ill performed the duties of a brother; it has even been asserted by his enemies that it was he who caused the banishment of Tostig,¹ who seems also to have harboured that opinion: but how could Harold have wished to share the power of half England with the house of Leofric? The king sent Harold back to them with the grant of their demand, and to declare the renewal of the laws of Cnut.² Meanwhile the "Rythrenas" cruelly ravaged the country about Northampton, destroying the people and driving off vast numbers of cattle, the effects of which devastation were seen and felt for many years afterwards. Tostig seems to have made an attempt to maintain himself by force of arms, but being repulsed, fled with his wife Judith to Baldwin, count of Flanders, and passed the winter at St. Omer's devising plans for the recovery of his earldom.

During the same winter king Eadward died.³ On his death-bed, at the earnest desire of his counsellors, he is said to have nominated Harold as his successor,⁴ a choice which he might have thought the most beneficial to his kingdom, as, in consequence of Tostig's

¹ Order. Vital. "Heraldus ipsum exulare compulit." Of the enmity between Harold and his brother in their earliest years, see Ailredi Vita Eadw. p. 394, which account has been transferred by Henry of Huntingdon to their later years. The Norman partisan, Will. of Malmesbury, also expresses himself very severely respecting Harold's conduct towards Tostig.

² Sax. Chron. Fl. W.

³ Sax. Chron. Fl. W. a. 1066, Jan. 5th. Some MSS. of the Saxon Chronicle, by placing his death in 1065, afford an early example of the beginning of the year being reckoned from the 25th of March.

⁴ See poem in the Sax. Chron. Fl. W. Eadmer. Hist. Eliens. l. ii. c. 43. Gul. Pictav. (Maseres, p. 104 and note.) Roman de Rou, v. 10,880 sq. Order. Vital

banishment and the marriage of Harold with Eadgyth, the daughter of Ælfgar and widow of Griffith, the interest of that powerful noble was closely connected with that of the two other most powerful men in the country.

The weak character of Eadward had so manifestly displayed itself throughout his whole reign, that all his piety and goodness were insufficient to acquire for him in the estimation of his people the character of a venerated sovereign. At the same time the faults of his government do not seem to have appeared so glaring in the eyes of his contemporaries, the other states of Europe being usually at that time governed more by a number of dukes and counts than by the sovereign himself, and more under the pernicious influence of an ambitious clergy than England was even under Eadward the Confessor. If he did not personally engage in warfare, yet valiant commanders gained victories in his name, which extended England's power more widely than ever. These successful wars gave, moreover, little cause of anxiety for the independence of the state, while they opened a vent for the ferment left after the Danish oppression, and afforded free exercise to the long tried and apparently broken strength of the nation. Eadward, moreover, desired only the happiness and prosperity of his people; and his was the rare gratification of having relieved them from all oppressive imposts. His administration of justice is without reproach. Hence it is explicable, why the memory of the pious Eadward was held so dear by the Anglo-Saxons, and more particularly when contrasted with the preceding and following reigns. The fair-haired, blue-eyed king was the last Anglo-Saxon sovereign of Cerdic and Woden's race; the name, the

laws, of Eadward the Confessor became, therefore, the symbol, as it were, of the whole Anglo-Saxon constitution.

The surname of "the Confessor" was bestowed on Eadward in the bull for his canonization of pope Alexander the Third, about a century after his death. The day after his decease his corpse was deposited in his newly-erected abbey-church of Westminster, where his tomb, though raised at a later period, and bereft of its decorations, still remains an object of deep interest to every cultivated mind, and to some, both natives and strangers from afar, even of fervent devotion.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A.D. 1066.

Harold's Coronation—Tostig's Landing—Harald Hardráda—Battle of Stanford Bridge—The Welfs—Designs of William of Normandy—His Parliament at Lillebonne—Preparations for Invasion of England—Embarkation—Landing of Normans—Battle of Hastings—Death of Harald.

ON the death of Eadward, the state of the kingdom appeared so perilous, in consequence of the pretensions to the crown to be apprehended from various quarters, that the adoption of measures for its safety called for the utmost celerity. As the end of the king had for some time been expected, the chiefs of the realm had felt the more pressing necessity of being near him at the Christmas festival, and at the consecration of his new minster.¹ On the day of Eadward's funeral, Harold was chosen king by the voice of all the thanes present at the court, of whom the most influential were his own relations;² a few only giving their suffrage in favour of the ætheling Eadgar.³ As the archbishop of Canterbury,

¹ Ailred. de Vita Edwardi, p. 398.

² Fl. W. "A totius regni primatibus electus." Hist. Eliens. lib. ii. c. 43, where everything concerning Harold, which Florence has not translated from the S. Chronicle, is to be found in the words of Florence. That Harold did not get the crown against the will of the chiefs of the nation, as William of Malmesbury and some Norman writers affirm (Wace excepted), who speak of Harold only to utter falsehoods to his prejudice, is manifest from the support which he soon received.

³ H. Hunt.

Stigand, had not been acknowledged by the pope, the coronation ceremony was performed by Ealdred, archbishop of York.¹ On Eadgar ætheling, whose lawful pretension to the crown could not, on account of his tender age, be taken into consideration, the earldom of Oxford was conferred. From the outset of his reign Harold, with great circumspection and activity, took measures for the welfare of the kingdom, as he had before done for the province intrusted to his administration. A strict dispensation of justice, the introduction of better institutions and laws, security on the public highways, the most zealous anxiety for the restoration of the military establishment, protection and favour to the clergy,—all this was expected from, promised and actually introduced by a king who had long been prepared and qualified for his exalted office. Of his capacity as a ruler, of the vigour with which he developed his talents, there is, even among his enemies, who have striven to impute to him so much that is disparaging, only one, and that a favourable opinion.²

¹ The Norman writers, for the purpose of representing him as unconsecrated, falsely assert that he was crowned by Stigand; to wit, William of Poitiers, p. 191, and from him Order. Vital. p. 492, the latter of whom, although he must have known better, also makes Tostig, as the elder son of Godwine, to have been driven out of Wessex, his paternal inheritance, by the younger Harold. But the slanderous gossip of the Normans exhibits itself most glaringly in representing Harold and his brothers, not as the sons of Gytha (whom they erroneously affirm to have been the sister of Cnut), but of a second unknown wife of Godwine: so Malmesbury, lib. ii. 13. Florence (a. 1067) also errs in making her the sister instead of the father's sister of king Svend. Domesday has "Gida (Ghida), mater Heraldī comitis."

² Order. Vital. p. 492 B. "*Erat enim magnitudine et elegantia viribusque corporis animique audacia et linguæ facundia multisque facietis et probitatibus admirabilis.*" See also Roman de Rou, v. 10,710 sq.

In the north of the kingdom an unfavourable disposition, excited by the adherents of Tostig, began to manifest itself; but the presence of Harold, who, accompanied by Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester, had hastened to York, effected a most beneficial change.¹ Tostig, seeing the impossibility, for the present, of realizing his own hopes of succeeding to the throne, had, it is probable, formed an alliance with his brother-in-law, duke William, and with the count of Flanders, in support of the pretensions of the former. So, at least, the Norman accounts lead us to conclude; while the English and the Northern chroniclers speak of transactions which raise the supposition that Tostig, on being informed of William's fixed determination to make himself master of England, resolved to acquire the kingdom or, at least, a part of it for himself.² As early as April he appeared with a considerable fleet, including many Flemings, off the Isle of Wight, where he levied a contribution both of money and provisions, and thence, committing depredations along the coast, he directed his course to Sandwich, which, on the intelligence of his brother's approach, he left, taking with him a number of sailors (*butse-carls*), some willingly, others by force. Harold, having in the meanwhile received information that duke William was also meditating a descent on England, had collected a larger army and fleet than had ever been seen in the country. After staying some time at Sandwich, for the purpose of seeing his fleet assembled, he proceeded to the Isle of Wight, there to keep watch on the preparations in the Norman ports, and distributed his land forces along the

¹ W. Malm. de Vita S. Wulfstani ap. Wharton, A. S. t. ii. p. 253.

² Also Adam. Brem. iv. 14: "Tosti . . . cum sceptrum sibi erep um audiret."

coast. During the summer and a part of the autumn he remained there awaiting his enemy, but provisions failing, he found himself compelled to disband his army.¹ Harold himself then returned to London, whither he also ordered his ships to proceed, several of which perished in a storm.

Tostig, having sustained a repulse on the Isle of Thanet from Copsi his former deputy in Northumbria,² sailed with sixty ships to the mouth of the Humber, ravaged the territory of Lindsey, and slew many of the inhabitants, but was soon driven thence by the earls Morkere and Eadwine, and abandoned by his sailors.³ With twelve small ships he now sailed to Scotland, where he and his found an hospitable reception from king Malcolm Ceanmore, with whom he continued during the summer.

Tostig had vainly solicited the Danish king Svend to join him in an invasion of England, the former province of Denmark.⁴ With the king of Norway, Harald Hardráda,⁵ Sigurd's son, a hero renowned in history and song for his adventures and achievements in Europe and Asia, he was more successful. Tostig appears to have represented himself as the next entitled to the

¹ Sax. Chron. a. 1066, Sept. 8th. "þa wæs manna metsung agán." Fl. W. "victu deficiente."

² Gaimar, v. 5164 sq. Cf. Sim. Dunelm. Hist. Eccles. Dunelm. col. 37.

³ Fl. W.

⁴ Adam. Brem. iv. 14. "Anglia Danis ex antiquo subjecta est." Snorre, l. c. c. 81. In the following chapters of this Saga, Snorre is a very valuable authority, closely agreeing (a few variations in the Anglo-Saxon names excepted) with the English sources, and exclusively giving many interesting particulars.

⁵ It is singular that all the English authorities, as well as Ordericus Vitalis and Gaimar, give to this king Harald the surname of Harfagr or Harvagre—the fair haired—who had been dead a century before.

throne, and eldest son of Godwine. To Harald he promised the half of England.¹ In the course of the summer a Norwegian fleet of three hundred sail² was fitted out, which was joined off the coast of Scotland by Tostig's little fleet and by that of their allies, the earls of the Orkneys, Paul and Erling, the sons of Thorfinn, together with some Scottish and Dano-Irish ships.³ In the beginning of September they landed at Scarborough, which town, after an obstinate conflict with the inhabitants, they burnt.⁴ On the intelligence of the Norwegian invasion, Harold collected seven bodies of forces⁵ destined for the north, but was unable to arrive in time to support the earls Eadwine and Morkere, who had been attacked near York by the Norwegians and Flemings.⁶ In a bloody battle at Fulford on the Ouse, near Bishopsthorpe, the field of which was shown for ages after,⁷ the two earls were defeated with great loss, not only of the common people, but also of ecclesiastics,⁸ whose sentiments, like those of their archbishop, were in favour of Harold. A few days after this disaster,

¹ Theodor. de Reg. Norweg. c. 28. Snorre, lib. i. c. 77. Saxo Gram. ed. Müller, p. 555. Order. Vital. p. 493 D. The Saxon Chronicle says, "Tostig him to beah and his man wearð," *Tostig submitted to him and became his man*. The other half might have been destined for William. Huntingdon has, "Tosti subditus est ei." Marianus Scotus, "Haraldus venit in Angliam regnaturus."

² Sax. Chr. Fl. W. "plus quingentis magnis navibus." So Sim. Dunelm. Snorre says, "two hundred Norwegian ships of war."

³ The Scottish aid is not only probable in itself, but is, as well as the Irish, mentioned by Adam. Brem. iv. 14.

⁴ Snorre, c. 86. Marianus Scotus.

⁵ Marianus Scot. and from him Sigebert and others.

⁶ Sax. Chron. a. 1066, Sept. 20th; Snorre, c. 88, who agree in the day.

⁷ Sim. Dunelm. H. Hunt.

⁸ Marian. Scot.

the royal army reached Tadcaster, where the fleet also assembled. The Norwegian king and Tostig having received hostages, promised peace and protection to the country, on condition that its warriors should march with them southwards, and co-operate with them in subduing the kingdom. Occupied with this design, they left the city of York, and, taking with them a hundred and fifty hostages, and leaving a like number of their own in the city,¹ proceeded to Stanford Bridge on the river Derwent. The English army under Harold was gladly received at York, and on the 25th September² surprised the hostile forces at the before-mentioned place, at the moment when their leaders were on the eve of returning to York, for the purpose of appointing new officials, granting fiefs, and appropriating to themselves the new conquest, in accordance with the practice of the most unlimited sovereigns. The jarls Paul and Erling had been left behind with the ships, when Harald and Tostig on their march perceived clouds of dust eddying before them, which were interpreted by the latter as signs of a body of friends marching to their aid. On recognising them to be English troops, Tostig prudently advised the king, who was not armed for the conflict,³ to retreat with all speed to the ships, and there unite with his forces those which had remained behind under Paul and Erling; but

¹ Fl. W.

² According to the Chronicle, the battle was fought within five days of the vigil of St. Matthew, or, according to Florence, VII. Cal. Oct.; hence the error of the Norman writers, VII. Oct. Snorre (c. 90) gives the correct date, "Monday after St. Matthew;" and (c. 100) "nineteen days before the battle of Hastings," which was fought on the 14th Oct.

³ Mariæ. Scot. "Araldum imparatum absque loriceis invenit." Saxo Gram. p. 555, "neglectis corporum munimentis."

the bolder counsel of the Norwegian prevailed, and three swift riders were despatched to bring up the reinforcement. Harðráða then caused his banner called "Landeyda" (the desolation of lands) to be set up, around which he and all his followers were stationed. The infantry were drawn up in one line, forming a hollow circle, with shield joined to shield, and their spears driven into the earth before them, in order to check the onset of the hostile cavalry: the light archers were placed wherever the enemy seemed to threaten an attack. As Harold advanced with his stout band of English foot and horse, he espied a Norwegian leader with a bright blue mantle and a glittering helmet, mounted on a black charger, surveying the line. The Norwegian's horse stumbled and cast his rider on the earth. "Who," inquired Harold, "is that gigantic form who has fallen from his steed?" On being informed that it was his royal adversary, he exclaimed to his warriors about to begin the onset, and when a happy word is wont to make a deep impression, "A stately man, but his luck, you see, has already forsaken him!"¹

Tostig had raised his banner in another part of the field. An officer with a detachment of twenty English *þiinga-men* or *hus-carls*, both men and horses completely cased in iron, rode up and inquired for the earl, to whom he would deliver a message from his brother: "Know that I am he," said the chieftain addressed; "King Harold," then continued the horseman, "sends you his greeting and this message: he offers peace and all

¹ Snorre, c. 93, who also relates, that the Norwegian king, preserving his presence of mind, immediately cried out, "A fall forebodes luck to travellers!" Theodoric, on the other hand, says that he declared the fall to be a bad omen.

Northumbria; aye, and to secure you as a friend and ally, he would not deem a third of his kingdom too high a price." Tostig complained that this proposal had not been made at an earlier period, before so much blood had been spilt, but, nevertheless, asked what indemnity awaited Harald, Sigurd's son, for the expense and trouble of the war. "Seven feet of England's earth, or as much more as his length exceeds that of other men," was the answer of the harnessed warrior. "Then ride back to your master, and let him arm for the fight; for never shall it become a truthful tradition among the Norwegians, that earl Tostig forsook their king in the land of his enemies. Together will we conquer England or die with honour." The Norwegian monarch, on being informed that the spokesman (a man of noble mien, whose firm seat had drawn his attention the more in consequence of his own disaster) was the king of England himself, blamed the earl for letting so precious a booty escape free. On which Tostig declared, that he would rather sacrifice his own life than that of him who came as a messenger of peace.

The attacks of the English cavalry were at first effectively repulsed by the spears of the Norwegians, and they appeared as if inclined to retire from weariness; when the desire rapidly to pursue and totally annihilate their adversaries caused the Norwegians to break their firm array, their wall of shields (Skilborg), and to rush forth individually; seeing which, the English, inspired with new courage, wheeled about, and again vigorously assailed their enemies. The example of the Norwegian king, who with a berserker's fury destroyed all opposed to him, would probably have again inspired his followers, had not a fatal arrow pierced him in the neck, and instantly deprived him of

life. Tostig hereupon stationed himself by the Landeyda, having rejected a second offer of peace made to him and the surviving Norwegians, who refused all quarter. Fighting with a lion's rage Tostig now fell, and the field seemed won for England, when Eysteinn Orri, the favourite of the slain Harald, to whom he had betrothed his daughter Maria, arrived with the warriors from the ships, and a third conflict began. The steadfast and desperate bravery of a Norwegian, who had posted himself at the head of the bridge, checked for a short time the advance of the English, of whom, it is said, he slew forty with his battle-axe. No spear reached the practised warrior, till at length an English soldier stealthily passing beneath the bridge in a boat, was thence enabled to wound him mortally under the hauberk.¹ No valour of the Norwegians and their allies could now compensate for the want of order and discipline. Evening found the English victorious, and all the chief men of the Norwegians slain. A king of Ireland is also named among the fallen.² The bleached bones of those who fell in this battle, one of the bloodiest ever fought on English ground, long remained as a memorial to the passer-by of the murderous conflict that had there taken place.³ The spot was afterwards known by the name of 'Battle Bridge' (*Pons Belli*). Olaf, the son of the Norwegian monarch, and the bishop by whom he was attended, as well as Paul the jarl of the Orkneys, found a kind reception from the victor,

¹ Sax. Chron. Marianus ap. R. Higden.

² Adam. Brem. lib. i. Lambert of Aschaffenburg says, "*rex Anglo-Saxonum tres reges cum infinito eorum exercitu usque ad internecionem delevit.*"

³ Order. Vital. p. 500. [ed. Maseres, p. 174. "*Locus belli pertranseuntibus evidenter patet, ubi magna congeries ossium mortuorum usque hodie jacet.*"—T.]

and after having given hostages and taken oaths of amity, were with twenty-four ships and the remnant of the army permitted to return home. The booty which fell into the hands of the conqueror was very considerable, including, it is said, besides three hundred ships, a quantity of gold that had been acquired by the Norwegian king during his wars in the East, and which now became the property of Harold of England, and subsequently of his successor.¹ Harold's ill-timed parsimony, in reference to this treasure, disgusted and alienated from him many of his adherents, at a moment when he most stood in need of true and efficient friends.²

Harald Hadráda had been accompanied from Norway by Elizabeth his queen and her two daughters, whom for the sake of security he had left in the Orkneys.³ Tostig's treasures did not fall into the hands of the conqueror, having been left at Bruges in the custody of his consort Judith. Her hand and wealth were afterwards (1071) obtained by Welf the Fourth, the son of Azo and Kunigunde, the founder of the younger line of the house of Welf, whose sons, Welf the Fifth and Henry the Black, possessed successively the duchy of Bavaria, from which illustrious stock the present royal race of England derives its descent.⁴

Harold could not rejoice in his victory ; uncertainty

¹ Sax. Chron. Fl. W., who gives twenty as the number of ships in which they returned. Annal. Saxo, aa. 1066, 1126, where Judith is considered as the wife of Harald, and where the tradition is also found, that the treasure came through her into the possession of Welf.

² Marianus ap. R. Higden.

³ Snorre.

⁴ Anonym. de Guelphis, also Chron. Ursperg, call Judith "regina." For Judith's foundations, interment at Weingarten, etc., see Orig. Guelphic, t. ii. p. 268 sq.

with regard to what might happen in the south of his kingdom filled him with disquietude. Duke William had, from the moment that brought him the intelligence of king Eadward's death, been unremittingly occupied with the design of conquering a country of which, according to the notions propagated by himself, he was the indisputable heir; but that neither he nor his barons cherished any very confident hopes of success, is manifest on a close consideration of the manner in which the great work of the conquest of England began.¹ William was in his park of Quevilly at Rouen, surrounded by knights, pages and esquires,² and about to engage in the pleasures of the chase. He had just strung his bow, and delivered it to be borne by an attendant, when a messenger arrived from England drew him aside, and informed him of the death of Eadward and the accession of Harold to the vacant throne. At this intelligence, the duke became like one frantic, and instantly left the park. In his paroxysm he repeatedly fastened and unfastened his mantle, and, without speaking to any one, or any one daring to speak to him, stepped into a boat and crossed the Seine to Rouen. On entering his hall he cast himself on a bench, and covering his face with a mantle, rested his head against a support. Thus he continued for a length of time, to the astonishment of all, when the seneschal, William of Breteuil, the son of Osbern³ (Asbiörn), entered the

¹ For what follows the *Roman de Rou* (v. 10,983 sq.) is a very valuable authority, of which the *Chronique de Normandie* (Bouquet, t. xiii.) is little more than a somewhat amplified copy.

² *Roman de Rou*, v. 10,989 sq.

“Mult aveit od li chevaliers
E dameisels et esquiers.”—T.

³ William, sire or lord of Breteuil, in the arrondissement of Evreux,

hall, and addressing him, urged him at once to divulge the cause of his affliction, particularly as the news of Eadward's death was already beginning to be the subject of conversation in the streets of Rouen. Yielding to the representations of his seneschal, William despatched envoys to Harold, reminding him of his engagements on oath, and calling on him to fulfil them. One of these, the marriage with Adeliza, had been cancelled by the hand of death. Harold not only refused to comply with William's demand, but, on receiving the defiance of his adversary, drove from the kingdom all the Normans established there, on whom

was the son of the seneschal Osbern of Crepon, son of Herfast brother of Gunnor, consort of duke Richard I. Osbern married Emma (whose name we learn from *Monast. Angl. t. vi. p. 1101*), daughter of Eremberge, the wife of Raol, count of Ivry, son of Sprota, who, after the death of her first husband, duke William Longsword, married Asperling, a rich Norman. Osbern's brothers were Hugo, bishop of Bayeux, and John, bishop of Avranches, afterwards archbishop of Rouen. Besides William and Roger, Osbern had another son of his own name, who in 1074 became bishop of Exeter. See *Ellis, Introd. i. p. 460, ii. p. 193*. Emma died abbess of St. Amand at Rouen. See *Monast. ut sup.* [The word *fitz*, prefixed to the name of an individual's father, did not at this period constitute the surname of that individual, but was used merely to distinguish him from others bearing the same baptismal name, and is neither more nor less than the affix *son* of the Northmen translated into French, on the adoption of that tongue by the conquerors of Neustria. *Fitz* (*filtz, filius*) Osbern is, therefore, equivalent to the Northern *Asbiörnsson*, and, in like manner, *fitz Walter, fitz John, fitz Simon, fitz William*, are identical with *Watson, Johnson, Simson, Williamson*. It may be presumed that our names ending in *son* denote the descendants of Danes settled in England before the Conquest; while those with the prefix *Fitz* indicate either descendants of the followers of William, or English who adopted the Norman usage. Permanent transmissible surnames were not in use till a much later period.—T.]

king Eadward had bestowed castles and fiefs.¹ For the purpose of deciding on the measures rendered necessary by this state of things, William called a meeting of some of his chief barons, to wit, Robert, count of Eu,² Roger of Montgomery,³ William of Breteuil (afterwards earl of Hereford), Walter Giffard, lord of Longueville,⁴ his own half-brothers, Odo, bishop of Bayeux, and Robert of Mortain,⁵ Roger of Vieilles, or d of Beaumont-le-Roger,⁶ and Ivo, surnamed 'au Chapeau,'⁷ a brother-in-law of the duke. To these

¹ Roman de Rou, v. 11,076 sq.

² The Conqueror gave him the castlery of Hastings and extensive possessions in Sussex. See Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 463.—T.

³ Roger, sire of Montgomeri, and, in right of his wife Mabile, count of Alençon and Bellesme. From William he received Shropshire, the city of Chichester and the castle of Arundel. See *Rom. de Rou*, ii. p. 198, M. Le Prevost's note.—T.

⁴ In the arrondissement of Dieppe. He was the son of Osbern of Bolbec, and Aveline his wife, sister of Gunnor. It was his son of the same name who was made earl of Buckingham.—T.

⁵ Odo and Robert were uterine brothers of the Conqueror, being sons of Herluin of Conteville and Arlot the concubine of duke Robert. Odo died at Palermo, on his way to the Holy Land. See Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 376.—T.

⁶ Vieilles is a small commune in the canton of Beaumont, arrondissement of Bernay. Roger's son became earl of Leicester on the grant of Henry I.—T.

⁷ Ivo, or Iwun, al Chapel, according to Wace (v. 11,144), married Muriel, a daughter of Herluin and Arlot, consequently a uterine sister of William:

"E Iwun manda al Chapel,
Ki à fame aveit Muriel,
Serör li dus de par sa mere,
E Herluin aveit à pere."

No mention of this sister occurs elsewhere, and William's sister Adelis, or Adelaide, was married to Eudes, count of Champagne.—T.

William communicated the events that had taken place in England, and his intention of crossing the sea, to avenge himself on the faithless Harold; being confident that, with their concurrence, the aid of his people and the permission of God, it would be easy for him to recover his right. Hereupon the barons present unanimously declared their willingness to accompany him, and, if necessary, to pledge or even sell their lands for his service; at the same time advising him to call a general assembly of his nobles, and lay the whole case before them.

This assembly or parliament,¹ at which the whole body of the Norman nobility was present, was held at Lillebonne. The communication was listened to with tranquillity; but when William had left them to their own deliberations, many objections were raised, notwithstanding the earnest endeavours of William of Breteuil, both by argument and fair speeches, to gain their concurrence. They were poor, they said, and oppressed in consequence of many previous aids and imposts; adding that no duke could command a Norman knight, or even burgher to cross the sea; while Harold, on the contrary, was possessed of great wealth, whereby he was enabled to take into his pay, friends, leaders and kings; and had, moreover, the largest fleet and numerous seamen, whose skill and boldness had been proved in many storms and battles. They also said that his land-army was much larger than that of the Normans, who in the course of a year could not bring together the ships and rowers requisite for such an enterprise; that so vast an undertaking was beyond the power of the Roman emperor himself;

¹ The expression occurs on the occasion of the insurrection of the Norman peasants. See Rom. de Rou, v. 5984.

and that their beautiful Normandy would be ruined by it.¹ So spake the majority, and solicited the seneschal to submit their view of the matter to the consideration of the duke. The wily courtier undertook the commission, in the hope through artifice of securing their co-operation. At the head of the barons he announced to William, as their unanimous resolution, that, as faithful vassals they were ready for his advancement to leap into the ocean or cast themselves into a raging fire; that they would cross the sea with him and double their services; that he who according to his tenure should bring twenty knights, would on this occasion bring forty; he who should serve with thirty, would now serve with sixty; that for his own part he would furnish sixty ships well-manned and armed. But the Norman barons were not to be so easily entrapped. They murmured loudly at the promises made for them by the seneschal, which were by many openly disavowed; though what chiefly alarmed them was the mention of doubling their services, which might be turned into a custom, and be thenceforth regularly exacted. While the assembly was thus giving vent to its adverse feelings in empty clamour, the duke withdrew, and sending for his barons one by one, solemnly pledged himself, that whatever they might do for his service beyond the terms of their tenures, should be for their advantage, and never be made a precedent for the future. Each one then stated the number of men and ships he could send, which the duke instantly caused to be registered. According to the account which Wace, in his childhood, heard from his father, the number of ships was six hundred and ninety-six. With this number the lists still extant nearly

¹ Guil. Pictav. H. Hunt. Roman de Rou, v. 11, 174 sq.

accord as to the contributions of the several great barons. The number of three thousand, which is also stated, can hardly be other than a gross exaggeration, even if the smallest boats are included in the computation.¹ Having assured himself of the support of his states by their oaths sworn at the castle of Bures,² the duke sent into the neighbouring countries of Brittany, Maine, Anjou, Ponthieu and Boulogne,³ inviting knights and soldiers to join his standard, and promising lands, or rich rewards in money and costly gifts to all, in the event of his success. The greatest exertions were now made for the construction of vessels, and in collecting arms and stores from all quarters. The differences with Brittany had been triumphantly terminated. Alain Fergant, count of Penthievre,⁴ and his brother, the count of Leon, both sons of the count Eudes of Brittany, the sires of Dinan, Vitry, Raol of

¹ Roman de Rou, v. 11,564. The list in Taylor (on Gavelkind) also in Lyttleton's Henry II. b. i. append., and in Corrections and Additions to Wace, t. ii. p. 531, says 781 ships; or, according to the edition in the Reports of the Record Commissioners (1819 fol.), 776. The Chronique de Normandie says, "907 grandes nefes, sans li menu vaisselin." William of Poitiers gives no number, but William of Jumièges (vii. 34) 3000. The lists of Wace and Taylor differ widely from each other; according to the former, bishop Odo gave only 40 ships to his brother, according to the latter, 100; and the bishop of Mans, who, according to Wace, supplied 30, is not mentioned in the Taylor MS.

² Guernes del Pont. de S. Max.

³ Ordericus Vitalis mentions also Burgundians and other Cisalpines; whence Thierry speaks of Piedmontese. Guy of Amiens (v. 259) goes still further, and brings into the field "Apulus et Calaber Siculus quibus jacula fervent," meaning possibly some Normans who had returned from the south of Italy.

⁴ Cf. Daru, Hist. de Bretagne, i. 106. This Alain Fergant (Rom. de Rou, v. 12,795) must not be confounded with the contemporary duke of Brittany, who also bore both these names.

Gael,¹ Eustace, count of Boulogne, and many others, from the above-mentioned countries, obeyed the call. William also relied much on the support which he hoped to receive from the French king, Philip the First, with whom he had an interview at St. Germer; but the youthful monarch, on the earnest representations of his barons, who viewed with feelings of jealousy the prospect of such an increase to the power of their fellow-vassal, not only refused to aid, but even endeavoured to thwart him in his undertaking; though without sufficient forethought as to the consequences of success on the part of William, to induce him by a timely alliance with Harold to spare the French territories from almost incessant war for ages to come. Even the duke's father-in-law, count Baldwin the Fifth of Flanders, because no determined share of the country to be conquered was assured to him, abstained from a direct participation in the expedition; although, to favour William, he deceived Harold by false accounts; and the Flemings ever active, equally qualified by nature for all the arts of peace and war, were no more lacking in this instance than in any other conspicuous enterprise of the middle ages.²

¹ Sire of Gael, or Guader, and Montfort in Brittany. This chieftain received from William the county of Norfolk; but being discontented with the king, who disapproved of his marriage with Emma, a daughter of William fitz Osbern, he married her during the absence of the monarch, and entered into a conspiracy with Roger fitz Osbern, his brother-in-law. Being besieged in Norwich, he escaped and returned to Brittany, and joined the first crusade, in which he lost his life. See *Roman de Rou*, v. 13,627, and *M. Pluquet's* note, also *Ellis*, *Introd.* i. p. 471.—T.

² *Domesday* mentions the nephew of William, Gilbert of Ghent, Drogo of Beveire, the Flemings Hugo, Odo, Walter, Winemar, etc. William, it is said, paid to his father-in-law, and afterwards to his

To the emperor Henry also, and to Svend, King of Denmark, the duke applied for aid; both of whom seem, however, to have given him assurances which were never fulfilled.¹

In Pope Alexander the Second William found a most valuably ally. By the expulsion of Robert, archbishop of Canterbury, the court of Rome was already ill-disposed towards the son of Godwine: and the Anglo-Saxon clergy themselves complained bitterly not only of Harold's parsimony,² but even of his many spoliations of church property. For the former affairs of William, the celebrated Lanfranc had been his agent at the papal court, where he had left behind the most favourable disposition towards his prince, which appeared still more prominent amid the complaints brought against the sacrilegious and perjured usurper. Gisbert Grus, canon and archdeacon of Lisieux, brought William's charges against Harold before the papal court, for which service he was rewarded with the bishopric of Evreux.³ Harold, on the other hand, neglected to justify himself before the pope, and Alexander sent to his rival a consecrated banner richly ornamented, on which were represented the cross and the figure of an armed warrior, together with a ring, containing a hair of St. Peter, in token, as it were, of the divine and papal investiture of the land to be conquered. The archdeacon Hildebrand, afterwards Gregory the Seventh, showed himself favourable

son, Baldwin the Sixth, a pension of three hundred marks of silver yearly, for his services, which was continued to his son Baldwin. See W. Malm. lib. v.

¹ Guil. Pictav.

² See the proofs in Ellis, *Introd. i.* p. 312.

³ Order. Vital. 493 B.

beyond others to the interests of the duke, in the expectation of increasing the influence of the church of Rome in England, and effecting the restoration of St. Peter's penny; it, moreover, appears that he procured a bull of excommunication against Harold.¹

At length, in the month of August, the fleet assembled at the mouth of the little river Dive² and in the neighbouring ports, where it was detained during several weeks, waiting for a favourable wind to waft it across, when a breeze springing up from the west, it sailed to St. Valery-sur-Somme, where for four weeks it was again detained by contrary winds. An unhopcd for favourable moment for landing, while Harold and the English fleet were far distant from the southern havens, had passed by; sustenance for an army of more than fifty thousand warriors was becoming scarce, and the strict discipline which had been observed it was hardly possible longer to maintain.³ The soldiers began to show signs of impatience, to condemn the object of the enterprise, and to set forth its dangers.

¹ Epist. Gregorii ap. Bouquet, t. xiv. p. 648. Harold's excommunication is mentioned in the *Chronique de Normandie*, which here does not altogether agree with the *Roman de Rou*: the latter speaks of it, but later (v. 12,353). Harold's refusal to restore archbishop Robert afforded a pretext for this procedure, of which the sender of the consecrated banner would hardly fail to avail himself.

² The Dive is a little river which runs into the sea a few miles to the east of the greater river Orne, upon which the city of Caen is situated. Maseres' note on Guil. Pictav. p. 106.—T.

³ Guil. Pictav. p. 197 B. (Maseres, p. 106), "*Stipendio ipsius millia militum quinquaginta alebantur:*" and, "*Militibus et hospitibus abunde sumptus ministrabatur.*" At p. 199 D. (Maseres, p. 112) William's warriors are estimated at 60,000. Ordericus Vitalis, p. 500 B. (Maseres, p. 174), perhaps without authority, gives the amount at "*quinquaginta millia militum cum copia peditum.*"

The duke now caused the shrine of St. Valery, the patron of the town, to be borne in a procession, for the purpose of amusing and encouraging the discontented masses. The next sunset brought the long-desired wind, and the impetuous duke sent his heralds to summon all the warriors to the shore and on board of the ships with the utmost speed, without waiting for their attendants and baggage. At the first appearance of twilight, a lamp from the mast of the ducal vessel announced the moment for departure, the trumpets sounded, and the rising sun saw at the dawn of the twenty-seventh day of September the swarm of innumerable ships spreading over the roadstead, and moving away to sea. The ship which bore the duke and the consecrated banner was called the *Mora*, and was a present from his consort, the duchess Mathilda. At the mast-head was a gilded vane, and on the prow was the image of a boy in brass ready to let fly an arrow from a bended bow.¹ During the night the fast-sailing ship of the impatient duke had far outstripped the others, and on the following morning the sailor at the mast-head, on being questioned whether the other ships were in sight, answered that sea and sky were alone to be seen. Whereupon, having ordered the anchor to be cast, William with a cheerful countenance partook of an abundant repast, attended by its usual concomitant of spiced wine, and promised his men that all the others would by the favour of God soon arrive in sight. On being again questioned, the

¹ Roman de Rou, v. 11,592 sq. In the MS. of Taylor (on Gavel-kind) it is said that the child at the prow was of gold, and pointed with his right fore-finger to England, and with his left hand held an ivory horn to his mouth. See Add. and Correct. to Wace, t. ii. p. 532.—T.

sailor answered that four vessels were in sight; and to the third inquiry, he exclaimed that the number of masts and sails in sight appeared like a dense wood. With boisterous joy the anchor was now weighed, and the Mora with a part of the fleet safely reached Pevensey, while the others arrived at Hastings. This memorable event took place on St. Michael's day 1066, one thousand one hundred and twenty-one years after Julius Cæsar had led his Romans, and about six hundred and twenty-one years since Hengest brought his Saxons to take possession of the country. An army now landed of at least sixty thousand men, inured to warfare, eager for booty, and under a leader of determined valour and never-failing presence of mind. When William stepped on shore he fell forwards; the bystanders were appalled at the omen, but the duke instantly restored their courage, exclaiming, "By God's splendour! I have seized England with my two hands."¹ A Norman then ran to the nearest hut, from which having plucked a handful of the thatch, he presented it to the duke, saying, "Sire, receive the seizin, the country is yours."²

The Norman Robert, the son of Wimarce, who, as we

¹ Roman de Rou, v. 11,711 sq. Malmesbury (iii. 1) ascribes the speech to a warrior standing by, and is copied by Matt. Paris; whereby, as in similar deviations, a variety of sources may be recognised. In the Hist. Abbat. de Bello (Monast. Angl. t. iii. p. 240) the saying is given to William of Breteuil. [Before William left the Somme he had been told by an astrologer that he would accomplish his object without any fighting, and that Harold would become his liegeman. On his landing, the duke inquired what had become of the soothsayer, and on being informed that he was drowned, "It matters little," said he, "for he must have been a poor diviner about me, who could divine so little about himself." See Roman de Rou, v. 11,673 sq.—T.]

² Roman de Rou, v. 11,721.

have seen, already held large possessions in England, now communicated to his relation, William, the intelligence of Harold's victory at Stanford Bridge, warning him, in terms bordering on contumely, against the formidable force ready to assail him, and counselling him to hold himself for the present within his entrenchments.¹ The answer of William was simple and dignified. He would not, he said, defend himself behind either entrenchment or wall, but would fight with Harold without delay, though his force, instead of sixty thousand, were only ten thousand men. His ships he ordered to be drawn on shore, to be dismantled and placed under security; that neither the cowardly might use them for flight, nor the English fleet easily get possession of them.²

Harold was celebrating at York his victory over the Norwegian king and Tostig, when a messenger, who had ridden day and night from Hastings, brought him the intelligence of William's landing and of the magnitude of his army. Committing the booty he had gained to the custody of Ealdred, archbishop of York,

¹ Guil. Pictav. Maseres, p. 112. "Adversus quem non amplius tuos quam totidem despectabiles canes æstimo valere."

² So the doubtful story in the Roman de Rou (v. 11,731 sq.) and in the Hist. Abbat. de Bello seems explicable, viz. that William, immediately on his landing, caused the ships to be destroyed. William of Poitiers speaks of the "*custodia navium*," but makes the duke say, "*Ad effugium nullam viam patere; cum hinc arma et inimica ignotaque regio obsistant, illinc pontus et arma.*" From the Carmen de Bello Hast., it may be inferred that the ships were not destroyed:

"Litora custodis metuens amittere naves,
Moenibus et munis, castraque ponis ibi." v. 141 sq.

"Est mare post tergum, maris est iter ad remeandum
Pergrave, quod vobis *tempus et aura negat.*" v. 455 sq.

See also Taylor's 'Master Wace,' p. 230 note.

Harold proceeded with the utmost speed to London, taking the mercenaries with him, and having issued orders for the assembling of the general levy. But this force could never be armed and put in motion with any celerity, nor could Northumbria be left without a military force, the command of which he intrusted to the vice-gerefa Merleswain.¹ His brothers-in-law, the earls Eadwine and Morkere, and others,² remained behind, holding themselves, it would seem, not unintentionally aloof from a contest, the cause of which was approved of neither by them nor by Harold's own sister, the widow of Eadward,³ the success of which they doubted, and the result of which they, perhaps, did not wish to be favourable to Harold.⁴ Hence it would seem that the number of men which he had to oppose to the Normans was considerably under a hundred thousand, and by so much the more admirable appears the firmness with which he rejected William's demand to deliver up the kingdom, made through a monk of Fécamp, Huon Margot, and also a subsequent proposal, that he should surrender the crown to William, retaining for himself the land beyond the Humber, while his brother Gyrth should possess all the territory that had been governed by Godwine.⁵ Two other proposals, viz. to engage with the duke in single combat, or to leave

¹ Gaimar, v. 5255. See Ellis, *Introd.* ii. p. 185.

² See the *Legend of Waltham*, MS. Cott. Julius D. vi. cap. 20.

³ Guil. Pictav. p. 199.

⁴ Fl. W. h. a. "comites Eadwinus et Morcarus, qui se cum suis certamini subtraxere," etc. *Roman de Rou*, v. 12,877:

"D'ultre li Humbre n'i viut gaires,
 Quer cil orent altres affaires;
 Daneiz (i.e. Norwegians) les orent damagiez,
 E Tosti les out empiriez."

⁵ *Roman de Rou*, v. 12,254 sq. and v. 12,334 sq.

the decision of the quarrel to the pope, he also rejected, fearing the former possibly in the unconfessed consciousness of an oath thoughtlessly or faithlessly taken and violated, as a species of ordeal or God's judgment. Even Gyrth was influenced by a similar apprehension, and besought his brother to absent himself, and leave those to command in the approaching conflict who were free of all oaths and obligation to the Norman; saying he with his brave countrymen would fight for him; and that if he fell, Harold still survived to avenge him, and rally the fugitives.¹

Harold had also sent a monk to the Norman camp, for the purpose of conveying to William his own sentiments with regard to their quarrel, and of demanding his immediate departure from the kingdom.² The crafty duke was engaged in inspecting and securing his ships, when the arrival of the monk was announced to him. Pretending to be the confidential friend and a chief officer of the duke, through whom alone access to the latter could be obtained, William succeeded in drawing from the monk the entire substance of his errand; but, manifesting a striking contrast to Harold, who is said to have received with scorn and anger, and even to have misused a messenger sent to him by his adversary, William, having prepared his answers, gave a formal reception to the message, by which Harold denied every claim of William to England founded on the earlier gift of Eadward, and supported his own right by the last testament of the deceased king; urging at the same time, that, from the period of Augustine's mission to England, it

¹ W. Malm. i. l. Order. Vital. p. 500. For the Norman version of this passage see Roman de Rou, v. 12,150 sq.

² Guil. Pictav. Maseres, p. 112. Roman de Rou, v. 11,949.

was the customary law of the country to hold sacred the last bequest of the dying. William could not gainsay this, but appealed to the earlier gift, which, as he asserted, had been confirmed and sworn to by the nobles of the realm, the archbishop Stigand, the earls Godwine, Leofric and Siward, a declaration which it was difficult to refute—as all the three earls named had long been dead, and Siward even before the return of Eadgar atheling—but which must appear open to suspicion.¹ More favourably it seems to speak for William, that he offered to submit their difference to the decision either of the Norman or English law, and to abide by that decision; a proposal in which, considering the indubitable incapability of the king to dispose of his kingdom, we may possibly perceive only William's confidence in the aversion of many of the nobles to Harold.

The Normans had in the meanwhile strongly entrenched themselves near Hastings, and from thence had so mercilessly ravaged the neighbouring country, that for twenty years afterwards it lay waste and desolate.² The intelligence of this devastation added wings to the speed of Harold, and on the 13th of October he joined his army, which had advanced by rapid marches and encamped on the hills near Hastings, having been reinforced by a body of troops sent by the

¹ Among the enormous lies by which the history of this period is especially distinguished, that of bishop Guy stands pre-eminent, viz.

“Anglorum genitor (Wilhelmi sc.) sub juga colla dedit.”

Carmen de Bello Hast. v. 332.

Which implies that Robert the Devil had already achieved the conquest of England.

² See the proofs in Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 314 sq.

Danish king Svend.¹ But hardly half of the army that had marched from all parts of England to oppose the hated foreigners was gathered together, and the Danes proved altogether useless, declaring that against duke William himself they would not fight. Harold had despatched a fleet of seven hundred sail to the southern parts, to keep watch on the ships of William, in the fallacious hope of cutting off the retreat of his vanquished enemy.² It was his wish to surprise the Normans by an attack in the following night, or by the break of day. His Anglo-Saxons and mercenaries fortified themselves with meat and drink, and throughout the night sounds of revelry and the usual drinking cries were to be heard among them. The Normans had not expected the arrival of Harold, and a considerable detachment of them had on that day gone out in search of provisions. William was, however, soon apprised of the event, and made arrangements against a surprise, as well as for the battle to be expected on the following day; and also prepared himself and his followers by spiritual exercises, assisted by the bishops of Bayeux and Coutances, and many Norman ecclesiastics.³ The duke himself partook of the holy eucharist. At break of day he made a speech to his army, in which he expatiated on the wrongs inflicted on his people by the treacherous English, particularly the massacre on St. Brice's day, and the murder of Ælfred with his Norman followers, through the instrumentality of Godwine. In this he was interrupted by William fitz Osbern, who, riding up on a horse covered

¹ Guil. Pictav. p. 201 D. Maseres, p. 128. "*Copiosa auxilia miserat eis cognata terra Danorum.*"

² Guil. Pictav. l. c. Carmen de B. H. v. 319 sq.

³ Guil. Pictav. l. c. Maseres, p. 127. Roman de Rou, v. 12,491. W. Malm. i. l.

with iron, reminded him that it was time to arm for the conflict.¹ His hauberk being brought, William, in placing it over his head, turned the back to the front, when perceiving that the countenances of those around him manifested signs of alarm, he declared to them his disbelief in omens, adding that the hauberk which was at first wrong and then set right, betokened, if anything, that he, who till then had been but a duke, was about to be turned into a king.² He, nevertheless, yielded to the pious notions of his time, by hanging about his neck, as true and invincible supporters of his cause, the precious relics on which Harold had perjured himself. It was now an important consideration to whom the charge of bearing the consecrated banner should be given. William had offered it to Raol, or Ralph of Conches, and to Walter Giffard, both of whom had declined the post, from unwillingness to renounce their share in the battle. It was at length assigned to the custody of Tostein (Thorstein), son of Rollo, surnamed le Blanc, from the Pays de Caux, who received it with thanks and bore it gallantly;³ on which account

¹ Of William's speech we have three pretended reports, all differing from each other, viz. in W. of Poitiers (who does not, however, give it as authentic), in Wace, and in H. of Huntingdon. With respect to the day, that of St. Calixtus, the Anglo-Saxon and Norman writers agree; Florence only, in general so trustworthy, and Hemingford place it on the 22nd of Oct., while Florence's account, that Harold reigned nine months and as many days, agrees with the common one.

² Guil. Pictav. *Roman de Rou*, v. 12,633 sq. W. Malm. i. l.

³ *Roman de Rou*, v. 12,771. Order. Vital. p. 501. Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 497. ["Ce nom de Toustain est devenu le nom de famille d'une maison noble et distinguée de la Haute-Normandie, qui, en mémoire de cette circonstance de la bataille d'Hastings, a pris pour supports le ses armes deux anges tenant chacun une bannière." M. Le Prevost's note.—T.]

his kindred had quittance granted them of all service for their inheritance, which their heirs were privileged to hold for ever. The sacred banner was placed in the third division, consisting of Normans, and commanded by William himself. The first body, under Roger of Montgomery and William fitz Osbern, comprised the warriors of Boulogne, a number of Picards and the mercenaries; the second, commanded by Alain Fergant and Aimery, viscount of Thouars, consisted of the men of Poitou, Brittany and Maine. The Norman army excelled that of the English chiefly in its cavalry, an arm in which the latter were greatly deficient,¹ and also in their well-trained bowmen. The English were for the most part armed with battle-axes, in the use of which they were particularly expert; but many of them were wholly unprovided with strictly military weapons, and armed only with maces, iron forks, slings and clubs. Drawn up in close wedge-shaped array, in an advantageous position on an eminence, surrounded with palisades, and covered by their shields, they were protected as in a fortress.² The standard and the guard of the king and his brothers were intrusted, as their right, to the men of London; the Kentish men were posted in the foremost rank, that, according to their ancient privilege, they might strike the first blow.

¹ Their enemy, Guy of Amiens, says of the Anglo-Saxons (*Carmen de B. H. v.* 369 sq.),

“Nescia gens belli solamina spernit equorum,
Viribus et fidens hæret humo pedibus;
Et decus esse mori summum dijudicat armis,
Sub juga ne tellus transeat alterius.”

² William of Poitiers speaks of the “*lignis imposita saxa*” projected by the English, meaning, perhaps, thereby ponderous stones cast from engines on the heads of the enemy. See Maseres, p. 128.—T.

The Normans moved forwards, and Harold calmly and boldly awaited the attack ; but, on beholding the dense masses, particularly of cavalry, which displayed themselves, his presence of mind forsook him, as he had not looked for such vast multitudes, and, deceived by a letter from Baldwin, count of Flanders, had least of all expected to behold such a numerous cavalry. The war-cries of the Anglo-Saxons, "Holy-rood, God Almighty," were now to be heard, and in an instant the battle raged at three points ; trumpets, cornets and horns resounded from the hills ; and the Normans commenced the onslaught. The first stroke was struck by a gallant knight, renowned alike for valour and for song, who rode forth singing the song of Charlemagne, Roland and Oliver, and the paladins who fell at Roncesvalles. By the army he was known by the appropriate name of Taillefer. He had besought the duke to grant him this boon, and putting spurs to his horse charged before all the others. With his lance he pierced an Englishman and stretched him on the earth, then drawing his sword, he struck another, crying to those around him to lay on. In the tumult which ensued the gallant minstrel was surrounded by the English, and fell in the *mélée*.¹ The fear caused by this daring

¹ *Roman de Rou*, v. 13,149 sq. *Carmen de B. H.* v. 391 sq., where he is called "histrio," and "*Incisor ferri*, mimus cognominie dictus." [Huntington says of him, "*Quidam vero nomine Taillefer dudum antequam coirent bellatores, ensibus jactatis ludens coram gente Anglorum, dum in eum omnes stuperent, quendam vexilliferum Anglorum interfecit. Secundo similiter egit. Tertio idem agens et ipse interfectus est.*" It may, perhaps, be regarded as a proof of Wace's general veracity that he omits the sleight-of-hand feats ascribed to Taillefer to be found in Gaimar, who (v. 5271 sq.) relates, that after having thrown his lance on high three times, catching it each time by the point, he cast it the fourth time among the English, of whom he wounded one in the

achievement was favourable to the first onset of the Normans, who were, however, soon driven back by the strong arm of the Anglo-Saxons; the advancing infantry was thrown into disorder, and many of the Norman cavalry fell into a concealed trench. Great as the valour was of individual Normans, indefatigable as bishop Odo¹ and other men of eminence proved themselves, both in animating speeches and obstinate conflict, yet the greater unity and order of the Anglo-Saxons prevailed. The whole left wing of the Normans, forming the first body, and composed of the Bretons and mercenaries, fled; then also the third, the flower of the army, led by William himself, who was no longer to be seen. The noble Spanish charger, a present from a king of Spain, which had been brought to him by Walter Giffard on his return from St. James of Compostella,² was wounded by the spear of Gyrrh,

body. He then drew his sword, receded a few paces, threw that up also three times, then rushed at full speed amid the English, wounded many, but at length fell under a shower of missiles. Bénédict de St^e More also mentions that he was slain.—T.] The minstrels of that time often adopted warlike names, as Brise-tête, Fierabras, Tourne-en-fuite, etc.

¹ Wace (*v.* 13,243 sq.) informs us that “Odes li boen coruncz” (tonsuré), bishop of Bayeux, exhorted them to stand firm. He is described as wearing a hauberk over his alb, mounted on a white horse, and carrying a mace. His figure is conspicuous in the Bayeux tapestry.—T.

² Roman de Rou, *v.* 12,673. The horse had probably been sent to him by the king of Galicia, to whom his daughter Agatha or Adelaide had been given in marriage, after having been engaged to Harold. By Ordericus Vitalis (*lib.* v. p. 579) we are informed that she died of grief for the loss of Harold before she reached her new destination. See M. Le Prevost’s note, also Taylor’s ‘Master Wace,’ p. 83, Maseres, p. 103, and Mr. Amyot’s paper in the *Archæologia*.—T.

when he was compelled to take by force the horse of one of his Mancel knights;¹ two other horses were also slain under him, and it was generally feared that he too had fallen. From amid the hostile multitude he was rescued by count Eustace, and it was now that he displayed the coolness, the energy and the rapid glance of a consummate commander. With casque thrown off he hurried to the fugitives, showing to all that he still lived, and felt confident of success; exhorting them not to forfeit their share in the victory, and shamefully consign themselves to inevitable destruction. Scarcely had he brought these to a stand, and turned them against the English, when some thousands of the latter found themselves hemmed in between the rallied fugitives and the second division of the Normans, which the duke, on perceiving the wild impetuosity of the pursuers, had ordered to press forward between the latter and their main body. The English, hopeless in their straitened position, were now unmercifully slaughtered by the arrows, spears and swords of their numerous enemies, and the attack was immediately directed against their main body. On perceiving that his archers shot too low, and in their elevated position did but little execution among the enemy, whose bodies were covered with their ample shields, he directed them to take higher aim, whereby many were grievously wounded in the head and face, and Harold himself was stricken by an arrow in the eye. Yet was the firm position of the English not to be shaken; and if a body of Norman cavalry succeeded in piercing the line at any point, the chasm was instantly filled up by the warriors from the rear. After the fall of Harold, a Norman, it is said, struck off one of his

¹ Carmen de B. H. v. 471-523.

thighs, an act of brutality for which he was declared infamous by William, and ignominiously expelled from the army.¹

The battle had now raged from nine in the morning till three in the afternoon, when William, perceiving that it was not possible to break the firm battle-array of the Anglo-Saxons, and calling to mind the fortunate result of the late flight, commanded his men to turn their backs and flee. The manœuvre was successful. Raising a cry of triumph, the Anglo-Saxons, regardless of all order and in small detached bodies, rushed from their higher position into the plain beneath, in pursuit of the supposed fugitives, overloading them with imprecations and scornful utterances. On a sudden the cry of "Dex aie" (Dieu aide) was heard among the Normans, at which they wheeled round their horses, and in their turn became the assailants. The defeat of the English was now inevitable. Of the valour of individual Anglo-Saxons much is related, but their names have not been preserved by their Norman contemporaries, who celebrate the praise only of those whom we have already mentioned, and of a few other illustrious chiefs of their nation. William had sought Harold during the battle, for the purpose of engaging with him in single combat, but instead of him had encountered an Anglo-Saxon of distinguished valour, who beat in his helmet, but fell under the lances of the surrounding Normans. The English standard still proudly waved, and around it yet unconquered fought a small but heroic band, the flower of Harold's army. For the one party every instant teemed with hope, for the other with fear, that succour would speedily arrive, to inspire new strength, and steel to victory.

¹ W. Malm. iii. 1.

While hurrying to the point where the battle was yet raging, William met count Eustace with fifty cavaliers fleeing from the conflict, and desirous of giving the signal for retreat. He was stayed by the voice of William, whom he was about to counsel in a whisper to retire, assuring him that death awaited his further advance, when he received a stroke of such force between the shoulders, that the blood gushed from his mouth and nostrils, and he was borne from the field by his followers in an apparently dying condition. But William was not to be shaken. Twenty noble Normans now leagued together to burst through the ranks of the enemy and seize the royal standard:¹ many of them perished in the attempt, but the prize was gained, and the kingdom of Cerdic was no more. Harold, Gyrth and Leofwine fell near each other, and Sussex, the cradle of the family of Godwine, had now become its grave. The banner of modern Rome was planted by the Normans where had floated that of the last Anglo-Saxon king, which was sent to Rome as a present to the pope.² Those Normans who were not engaged in the pursuit passed the night on the field. William the Conqueror rested in a tent erected by his order close to the consecrated banner, and in the midst of the dead and dying. The long-forgotten name of the place was, before this battle,

¹ H. Hunt. *Roman de Rou*, v. 13,956. Guil. Pictavi: "Memorable vexillum Heraldii, hominis armati imaginem intextam habens ex auro purissimo." W. Mahn. (iii. 1) describes it in terms nearly similar: "Vexillum . . . erat in hominis pugnantis figura, auro et lapidibus arte sumptuosa contextum." In the Bayeux tapestry Harold's gonfanon bears something resembling a dragon. Qu. the standard of Wessex?—T.

² W. Mahn. iii. 1. "Vexillum post victoriam papæ misit Willelmus."—T.

Senlac;¹ and William, like his predecessor Cnut, who had consecrated all his most renowned battle-fields, caused a religious structure richly endowed to be raised on the place, and here the high altar of Battle abbey² marked the spot where first Harold's, and where afterwards the pope's, consecrated banner waved. The names of the chiefs who accompanied the duke, recorded on rolls of parchment at St. Valery, were there suspended,³ and in order to manifest the gratitude and humility of the victorious survivors, donation was heaped on donation, that the lamps might never expire, nor the prayer be silent, for the souls of the valiant Normans who fell on that memorable day. All these monuments of the battle of Senlac and the conquest of England are no more. Crumbled and fallen are the once lofty walls of Battle abbey, and by a few foundation-stones are we alone able to determine the spot where it once reared its towers and pinnacles. The worship for which the noble structure was raised has long since yielded to a simpler

¹ Order. Vital. "Senlaciū bellum," and "ad locum qui Senlac *antiquitus* vocabatur." Malmesbury, however, calls it "Bellum Hastingense." [In middle-age Latinity *bellum* is commonly used for *prælium*.—T.]

² Sancti Martini de Bello. The charter of foundation has not been preserved in its original form. It cannot, as in Rymer, be assigned to the year 1087, since William of Breteuil died in 1070: though Maurice cannot appear as bishop of London before 1085.

³ See the spurious roll in Du Chesne, Scriptt. Norm. p. 1023 sq., in Maseres, p. 367, and in Stowe, Summary of the Chronicles of England. Three others, all in rhyme and all different, are given in Bromton, p. 963, and Maseres, p. 371. Hearne, Liber Niger, t. ii. p. 522. and Leland, Collect. t. i. p. 221. Many of the names are also recorded in the Roman de Rou, and illustrated by M. Le Prevost. See also Taylor's 'Master Wace.'

faith; the posterity of the illustrious races, who for ages were the glory of the feudal system, have either fallen in bloody conflicts, or died out in the luxuries of peace. Even the constitution framed by William's warlike peers, which has for ages been maintained, modified and adapted to the ever-varying wants of the times, has by political reformation been shaken to its foundations. On receiving intelligence of Harold's fall, the earls Eadwine and Morkere proceeded to London, and sent their sister, Queen Eadgyth, to Chester.

One glance more we have yet to cast over the field of Senlac. The first corpses recognised showed how deeply the majority of the people had been impressed with the conviction that the whole form and manner of their past and present history were at stake in that conflict. Cased in the garb of war were found the bodies of the abbot of Hyde and twelve of his monks. One corpse was sought for in vain—that of the fallen Harold. Osgod Cnoppe and Ailric Childemaister, two monks of Waltham abbey, who had last attended the king, having followed him from Waltham, received permission from William to seek for his remains, but were unable to discover them, until Eadgyth, the queen of the fallen monarch, surnamed the Fair, and the Swan's Neck, accompanied them.¹ A disfigured corpse

¹ Fl. W. a. 1066. Similar traditions of slain princes thus recognised (observes Michelet, *Hist. de France*, t. ii. p. 152) are those of Eudes, count of Blois (ob. 1037) and Charles the Bold. [For the appellation of *mistress* usually bestowed on Eadgyth or Ealdgyth, I have not hesitated to substitute that of *queen*, fully concurring in opinion with Sir H. Ellis (*Introd. to Domesd.* ii. p. 79), that she was no other than the daughter of earl Ælfgar and widow of Griffith, prince of Wales, after whose death she became,

was now found, which, though no longer resembling Harold, yet by certain signs was known to be his. Gytha, his mother, offered to the duke for the body of her son its weight in pure gold,¹ which he rejected, adding with bitter irony, that it befitted him to be buried on the sea-shore which he had so long guarded. Whereupon he caused the body to be delivered to William Malet, one of his barons, for the purpose of interment on the coast.² According to later accounts the royal corpse was borne by the monks of Waltham to their abbey, newly founded by Harold, and there, with great pomp, entombed at the east end of the quire, in the presence of many Norman nobles and gentlemen. A tradition was long cherished among the people, that their king did not fall in the battle, but that, covered with wounds, he was rescued,³ lived long in a cell near

as we have seen, the wife of Harold. The name of Eddeva usually given her is a mere Norman corruption; that in Domesday she is never styled queen need excite no doubt, her husband not being designated king throughout that record. For a more ample discussion of this curious point, see Sir H. Ellis's note *ut sup.* Dr. Lappenberg questions the above identity, and asks, Does not Ealdgyth appear in Domesday as "Aldgid uxor Griffin?" (Warw. 238 b.) an objection which may be answered by the terms of the entry itself, which was apparently copied from a roll of a date anterior to the death of Griffith, otherwise she would hardly have been described as his wife.—T.]

¹ According to Baron Maseres' computation equal to somewhat less than 11,000 guineas. *Selecta Monum.* p. 134, *note.*—T.

² Guil. Pictav. Order. Vital. Later writers, as W. of Malmesbury, make William deliver the corpse of Harold to his mother without ransom. Bi-shop Guy (*Carmen de B. H.* v. 587 sq.), instead of naming Malet, says, "quidam, partim Normannus et Anglus . . . compater Heraldus," etc.

³ A detailed account of the Waltham MS. (*Cott. Julius D. vi.*) from which these particulars are derived, together with a list of its

St. John's abbey at Chester, and was buried in the abbey church. Henry the First, it is said, once visited him and long conversed with him; and on his death-bed he declared that he was Harold.¹ In this tradition we can perceive nothing more than the ardent desire of an oppressed people to find again and recognise their native king; a desire which in similar cases has often been productive of the most extraordinary delusions, as instances of which it is hardly necessary to cite Sebastian of Portugal, the German emperor Frederic, and the Greek emperor, Baldwin of Flanders.

By his first wife, whose name has not been preserved, Harold had three sons, Godwine, Eadmund and Magnus;² and two daughters, Gytha and Gunhild.³ A fourth son named Ulf, who became a captive of the Normans, was probably the child of Eadgyth.⁴ A fifth son named after his father is also mentioned, who found an hospitable reception with king Magnus of Norway, a successor of whom he accompanied on an expedition against England.⁵ The three first-mentioned sons of Harold fled to Ireland, and Gytha to her father's

contents, will be found in Mr. Stevenson's notice of the present work, printed in Cochrane's *Foreign Quarterly Review* for June 1835. See also Taylor's '*Master Wace*,' p. 303.

¹ The earliest allusion to this story is, I believe, to be found in Ailred of Rievaulx, p. 394: "*Aut mi-ere occubuit aut, ut quidam putant, pœnitentiæ tantum reservatus evasit.*" See the more circumstantial narrative in Giraldus Camb. *Itiner. lib. ii. c. 14* (Camden, *Anglica*, etc., p. 874), and, from him, Knygh-ton, p. 2342. Bromton, p. 961. The Harleian MS. 3776, fol. 21 b. contains the tale of Gyrth's escape: the extract is given by Sir H. Ellis in *Introd. to Domesd. ii. p. 134*.

² Fl. W. a. 1068.

³ Capgrave, *Legenda Angl.*

⁴ Fl. W. a. 1087.

⁵ Fl. W. a. 1087. W. Malm. lib. iii. iv

cousin, Svend, king of Denmark. She was subsequently married to Wladimir, son of Wsewold, czar of Russia ;¹ to whom she bore a son, Mistislav-Harold, who became the progenitor of an illustrious race. Harold's brothers, Ælfgar and Wulfnoth, became monks, the former at Rheims, the latter at Salisbury.²

¹ Snorre, ii. p. 178. Saxo Gramm. p. 556. Wedekind's *Noten*, ii. H. ft. 1. Karamsin, *Hist. of Russia*, ii. p. 26.

² Maseres, *Selecta Monumenta*, p. 186, *note*^r.—T

PART VI.

THE SOCIAL STATE OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS.



CHAPTER XIX.

Various Elements of Population—Language—Dialects—Political Institutions — Kingship — Queen — King's Followers — His Officers—Different Forms of Nobility—Various Grades of Rank —Freemen and the Servile—Slaves—Læt—Clergy—The Witan and its Members.

THE method followed in the present work of linking the history of the state with that of its rulers has appeared to us to commend itself, not only on account of the limited and disjointed character of the required materials, but also in consequence of the undeniable influence which the personal individuality of the head and foremost representative of a monarchy has at all times exerted over its destiny. There seems, moreover, a probability, that by a careful study of the leaders of a nation, in whom the people are, as it were, reflected, we may arrive at less one-sided views than if we were to direct our attention exclusively to the consideration of the numerous more remote, although perhaps also more important factors of the general system of national development. It cannot, however, be denied that the method which we have followed, especially where brevity is essential to the general plan of the narrative,

imposes the obligation of considering separately various essential points touching upon the interests and state of culture of a nation, and it is possible that the choice of such subjects may at times appear arbitrary, since it is dependent on the information which has been only accidentally or imperfectly transmitted to us; or on the actual state of historical inquiry in reference to the questions under discussion.

An insight into the constitution, manners and state of civilization of England before the Conquest must be the more instructive, as in this country all the then existing nationalities of Europe—the Slavonic race excepted—met together. The Celtic race has nowhere preserved itself so long as in Britain; the Germanic on this island alone was neither morally subdued nor socially remodelled by Rome, and nowhere else has it so early and independently borne fruit, or so nobly maintained itself; while the Northern has vigorously entered on the scene, and, though blended with the Saxon, is not lost. With these elements of population and development may be seen closely combined at various times those of the Mediterranean, through Romans, Christian clergy and Normans, in old Roman, Roman Catholic and Romance forms; while in the secluded mountains of Wales a *Celtdom*, and, in the smaller isles, a southern Iceland, have never died out. And this people, no longer primitive, but mingled with all the races of Europe, and in this national intermixture adopting no prevailing original speech, but a jargon, which not till the middle of the fourteenth century assumed a more fixed, though greatly deteriorated form:—this people and this tongue, only two hundred years later, possessed the greatest poet which the human race has ever known. To this was added,

shortly after, the most formidable power that the world has ever witnessed, and the most perfect constitution, the fundamental principles of which have exercised their influence over the countries of both hemispheres, and will maintain it through many ages to come.

But the chief elements of the language, and many of the institutions of England, are unquestionably to be sought among the Anglo-Saxons, and to these, therefore, the present brief sketch must be limited, excepting in as far as we must necessarily touch upon the broad basis of German nationality, and other special influences.

With regard to the difference between the Anglian and Saxon dialects, it is extremely difficult,¹ owing to the want of demonstrably ancient manuscripts, to pronounce any certain judgment. The provinces first occupied by the Angles were, it is probable, partially inhabited by a Germanic race before the time of Hengest and Horsa; whereas our manuscripts date from a period when those districts were possessed by Danes and Norwegians. The Latin, neither in consequence of its use among the Britons, nor from being the language of learning and the church, had any great influence on the Anglo-Saxon: while, on the other hand, many German words are to be found in Welsh, which for the most part owe their admission to the vicinity, civilization and supremacy of the Anglo-Saxons; though some may be referred to a remote and no longer manifest affinity between the Germanic and Celtic stocks. Of the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary about a

¹ An ancient testimony of the difference appears in Bede (H. E. lib. ii. c. 5), "Cealin, rex Occidentalium Saxonum, qui linguarum Ceaulin vocabatur." In Ælfred's West Saxon version, 'Ceawlin.'

fifth only is to be pronounced obsolete in the present English; and the Roman element is so far from being indispensable, that all the pedantry of the last century could in four words scarcely introduce one of Latin origin.¹

These few slight indications respecting the language allow us to form a conclusion, confirmed by various analogies, as to the extension and preservation of the legal institutions of the Anglo-Saxons. Yet, although the fact of the existence of the same institutions among all the Germanic races permits us to assign to them a remote antiquity reaching to the times of heathenism, and even beyond the period when first their names were known to us, we must, nevertheless, not allow ourselves to decide upon questions of the origin of private rights on simply linguistic grounds. It appears more in accordance with our object, first, in a connected series to describe briefly some essential political institutions, as they occur to us in the greater historical phenomena, or as particularly belonging to the Anglo-Saxons. The provisions especially affecting the private individual will then be more easily set forth and more readily understood.

Among the Germanic races who settled in Britain, it does not appear that there was any king. Among the Saxons and Frisians on the continent, even at a much later period, we meet with no king;² nor among the

¹ Turner, vol. ii. p. 440 sq. Mackintosh, *Hist. of Engl.* vol. i. p. 82. [The pedantry was Dr. Johnson's.—T.]

² Beda, v. 10. "Non enim habent regem antiqui Saxones, sed satrapas plurimos suæ genti præpositos, qui, ingruente belli articulo, mittunt æqualiter sortes, et quemcunque sors ostenderit, hunc tempore belli ducem omnes sequuntur, huic obtemperant; p. racto autem bello, rursum æqualis potentiæ omnes fiunt satrapæ."

old fixed inhabitants of Hadeln, Wursten, Ditmarschen, East and North Friesland, Stormarn and Holstein, was any kingship grafted on the free state. But to an army of new invaders, a general, supreme commander, who should combine and lead them against the natives, was indispensable. Such leaders were called heretogas (army leaders) or ealdormen; and even Ælle of Sussex (who to his kingship probably owed his Bretwaldaship over the other allied and subject small states), first, on the soil of the conquered country, converted the military command over his followers into that (borrowed from his Germanic home) bearing the sacred denomination of *son of the nation*, or, as expressed in their language, 'cyning' (king).¹ The king, created by the choice of the people, was, as we learn from Tacitus, not eligible from the whole body of the people, but only from the nobility.² The son of the deceased king, if under age, had no more hereditary right to the royal dignity than the mutilated or illegitimate; and it appears, from numerous instances, how frequently the brothers of the king have for ever excluded his youthful sons from the succession, and that the younger brother has been preferred to the elder.³ Those heretogas, whose kindred among the Anglo-Saxons exclusively formed the royal houses, derived their descent for the most part from Woden. These races were not only not distinguished from the

¹ See Allen's Inquiry into the Rise and Growth of the Royal Prerogative in England, *note H*.

² Germania, c. vii. "Reges . . . ex nobilitate sumunt."—T.

³ See Philipps, Angelsächs. Rechtsgeschichte, § 21. See also Mr. Arthur Taylor's Glory of Regality, 1820, Book 1, § 3. "Of the Election of our Kings," and the Chronicle of the English Coronations appended to the work, where this subject is examined in detail.

nobility, but exclusively constituted it, in the most ancient and strictest sense. *Æthelings* (nobles), or *clitones*, were among the Anglo-Saxons only the sons of a king or, in default of them, the relations next entitled to the succession. Herein, therefore, we find a principle similar to one still in force among the higher English nobility, with whom the third generation, if not heir to the ancestral dignity, no longer shows by any external sign its noble affinity. Although attempts were made to limit the right of suffrage in the election of kings to the clergy and the most distinguished laity,¹ yet frequent mention occurs (as in the instance of Eadward the Confessor) of election by the whole nation,² under which we may comprise all freemen not excluded by extraordinary causes. The limited power of the Germanic prince became greatly enlarged among the Anglo-Saxons through the influence of the Catholic clergy, the traditions of the Roman empire, and the earlier operation of both in the neighbouring states as well as through the gradual merging of the smaller states into a few, and finally into one large kingdom.³ The titles of *Basileus*, *Primicerius*, *Flavius*,⁴ *Augustus*, etc., prove the early adoption of foreign ill-understood ideas, and the spirit of Charles the Great continued to act in the Anglo-Saxon *Ecgberht* and his posterity. The nomination of the *ealdormen*, the highest provincial officials, had already fallen to the king; and here, as in many subor-

¹ Conc. Calchut. a. 785, tit. xii. (ap. Wilkins, i. p. 148): "*Reges a sacerdotibus et senioribus populi eligantur.*"

² Sax. Chron. a. 1042.

³ Guil. Pictav.

⁴ This title was assumed by many other German princes. See Philipps, *Deutsche Geschichte*, i. p. 479.

dinate matters, we see in him the full representative of the people.¹

The position of the Anglo-Saxon king was particularly marked by the circumstance, that for him a distinct 'wergild,' or pecuniary valuation, was established, of which in the laws extant of the other Germanic nations no mention is to be found. Of this wergild, one-half, constituting what was more strictly the 'wer,' fell to the kindred of the king, the other half, or cyne-bôt, to the nation; though originally, perhaps, only to the king's own followers or retainers. In Mercia the actual wer of the king was 30,000 sceats, equal to 7200 shillings, or 120 pounds, or to the wer of six thanes, or thirty-six 'ceorls' or peasants;² a proportion corresponding to the legal value of the oaths of these ranks. The entire wergild was, therefore, 240 pounds. The wer of the Mercian ætheling is not recorded. In Northumbria the king's 'gild' was 30,000 thrymsas, his simple wer the same as that of the ætheling and the archbishop, viz. 15,000 thrymsas, bearing a different proportion to the wergild of the thane (2000 thrymsas), and that of the ceorl (266 thrymsas). Here the whole royal wergild for the family and the people amounted to 375 pounds of silver. Mention is also made of the wergild of the West-Saxon king, though it seems to refer only to the wer accruing to his kindred. In king Ælfred's time conspiracy against the king's life, even indirectly, was punishable with loss of life and property.³

The high respect entertained by the Germans for

¹ See Allen on the Prerogative, p. 17, *French translation*.—T.

² See *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, tit. "Wergilds."

³ *Laws of Ælfred IV.* Comp. LL. Ripuar. tit. lxix. c. i. LL. Alamann. tit. xxiv.

the female sex was manifested in the exalted position occupied by the Anglo-Saxon queen. She was the wife (cwen) and lady (hlæfdige) in an especial sense; and, in the earlier ages of the Anglo-Saxon rule, must belong to one of the distinguished families of the country, or of a foreign land. The king's consort was consecrated and crowned with him, or separately if he married afterwards.¹ A transgression against, or contempt (oferhrynes, overseunessa) of the respect due to her in judicial proceedings, was punished as heavily as if committed against the king, while for a similar offence against a bishop or ealdorman (comes) the fine was less by half.² In the assemblies she sat on a throne by the king, where, by her presence, as well as on festive occasions, she gained considerable influence beyond that which she possessed through the management of her own property, and of that secured to her by the morning-gift (morgen-gifu), as well as through her separate secular and spiritual court establishment, which resembled that of the king, though on a smaller scale. The conspicuous part acted by queens in Anglo-Saxon history is evident on a glance over its most important events; and it would appear yet more conspicuous, could we enter on many provincial histories and those of the most considerable ecclesiastical foundations.³ A due claimed by the queen-consort, under the name of aurum reginæ (gersuma), or queen-gold, being a payment of an extra tenth on every voluntary fine or oblation of above ten marks paid to the king, and which was claimed as late as the time of Charles the

¹ As in the instance of Eadgyth, the queen of the Confessor. See Sax. Chron.

² Leges Henrici I. tit. xxxv. § 1.

³ Comp. Heywood, Dissertation on Ranks, etc.

First, by queen Henrietta Maria,¹ appears, as far as I am able to trace it, to have been confined to Mercia and East Anglia. In Wessex the queen's authority, in consequence of the crimes of Eadburh, the consort of Brihtric, was for a considerable length of time not acknowledged in its full extent, though after a few generations the earlier state of things was restored.

In times of peace the king was surrounded by his train of followers, *geferædnesse* (*geferscipe*, *folgoth*), in which, among the Anglo-Saxons, the German 'Gefolge' was long to be recognised; as in warfare, the heretoga, or leader, was encircled by his military retainers. To determine the relative rank of these followers depended on the prince.² The great court officials may be traced to the earlier times of the Christian Germanic kingdoms. The chamberlain, or bower-thane (*bur-thegn*, *cubicularias*³), was also the royal treasurer (*hordere*). The garments of the king were under the care of a keeper (*hrægl-thegn*). A sewer (*disc-thegn*, *discifer*⁴) also we often find about the king. The cupbearer (*pincerna*⁵) is early mentioned, though we are ignorant of his Anglo-Saxon appellation; and in general, the great diversity in the denominations of these officers among the Germanic

¹ See Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 171 sq.

² Tacit. *Germania*, c. xiii. "Gradus quinetiam ipse comitatus habet, iudicio ejus quem sectantur : magnaue et comitum æmulatio quibus primus apud principem suum locus."

³ As early as the time of bishop Wilfrith's youth this officer is mentioned: *Malmesb. de Gestis Pont.* "Cudda senator et cubicularis regis Oswiu." This may, however, be a later embellishment, as Malmesbury's source, Eddius (*Vita Wilfridi*, c. 2), describes Cudda merely as "unus ex sodalibus regis."

⁴ Under Æthelred. See Wilkins, *Concil.* i. p. 284, and charter, a. 785 in *Monast.* i. p. 291.

⁵ See charter of Æthelberht II. of Kent, in *Monast.* i. p. 453.

tribes is by no means favourable to the hypothesis, that they originated in times of heathenism, and then bore a religious signification. If in the Germanic state-economy we may anywhere suppose an imitation of Roman institutions, it is, without doubt, chiefly in the court life; and we know how many offices about the emperor and everything connected with his sacred person, the barbarians found ready for their selection and imitation. In the instance of the Marshal,¹ even the usual Anglo-Saxon denomination of Stallere (comes stabuli) indicates its Roman origin; for he is seldom designated the ‘cyninges hors-thegn.’ Of these stalleres or constables several are mentioned at the same time, who in some districts appear as standard bearers (vexilliferi). The first of them had the highest rank both in the witena-gemôt and in the field; hence it may be doubted, whether this highly distinguished officer held merely a court dignity, or might not rather, at the same time, have filled the more ancient state or military post of banner-bearer. Such exalted men in Wessex were Æthelhun, Thored and Osgod Clapa. As early as in charters of Æthelberht of Kent we meet with a Referendarius, probably the same dignity as that bearing from the time of Eadward the Elder the name of Chancellor.² A number of less considerable officers are likewise to be found in the service of the Anglo-Saxon kings, as the dispensator, or steward, the carnifex or executioner,³ etc.

No other nobility by birth than that immediately

¹ Old High Germ. marah, *horse*, and scalh, *servant*.—T.

² For the court offices, see Philipps, Angelsächs. Rechtsgesch. § 23, and Deutsche Gesch. i. p. 441. Palgrave, ii. p. ccxlv.

³ Fl. W. a. 1040. “Rex . . . majorem domus, dispensatorem suum carnificem et alios magnæ dignitatis viros Lundoniam misit.”

descending from the military or sea-king is observable in the Anglo-Saxon states; though immediately after the Saxon conquest, there arose in this, as in other Germanic countries, a nobility by service, or a feudal nobility, which was at first not assured by an uninterrupted succession, though it conferred on the children of the feudatory a rank corresponding to the post occupied by the father.¹ The patriarchal constitution, under which the eldest, in time of peace, directed the affairs of the tribe, may be recognised among the Anglo-Saxons in the official title of ealdorman. The *eldest* was synonymous with the *chief*,² and ealdorman (senior, senator, dux, princeps, satrapa, comes³) was consequently the designation of the most diverse officials, though more especially of one governing the larger districts. The title of eorl occurs in early times among the laws of the Kentish kings,⁴ but became more general only in the Danish times, and is probably of old Jutish origin. The ealdorman was solemnly girded with a sword; his duty in time of war was to defend and lead the forces of the district committed to him; in peace to adjudge, compose differences, and take care of the general interests both of the king and people. As an ætheling stands on the same level as an archbishop, so the ealdorman and bishop are considered of equal rank.⁵ In Ælfred's time the office of ealdorman seems to have been not only not hereditary, but not even

¹ Tacit. Germania, c. xiii. "Insignis nobilitas aut magna patrum merita principis dignationem etiam adolescentulis adsignant."

² The youthful king Eadward is called "eorla ealdor." See Sax. Chron. a. 975.

³ Comes rarely appears as a title before the eleventh century.

⁴ Laws of Æthelbert, xiii. xiv. Hloth. and Eadric, i. ii.

⁵ Anc. LL. and Inst. Wergilds III. Heywood on Ranks.

for life, as may be inferred from his words, that they were indebted to God and him for their office and dignity.¹ The dignity could not, however, be obtained without a decree of the witenagemot, as appears particularly from the transactions under Eadward the Confessor. Even in Godwine's family no hereditary dignity is to be recognised, nor in Northumbria, in the case of Siward's offspring. At the same time the office of the father was in the latter days of the Anglo-Saxon dynasty frequently bestowed on the son, if capable and qualified by the experience of his younger years. The county of Chester affords (provided the genealogy extant is genuine²) an instance of an earldom transmitted in hereditary succession during a period of three hundred years before the Conquest, the reason for which may probably be found in the difficulties with which that frontier was beset. In emulation of the pompous titles assumed by the Anglo-Saxon kings, the ealdorman also adopted a similar style, an instance of which we have already seen in the historian Æthelweard, who designates himself *Patricius Consul Fabius Quæstor Ethelwerdus*.

The post of ealdorman resembled in its duties and privileges that of the *grafio* or *graf* of the continental Germans. Even his revenues consisted, here as there (besides the higher *wergild* and *fines* or *bôts*), in the lands appertaining to the office, and a third of the fines and several profits arising from the courts, as well as from other revenues of the king.³

According to a most ancient custom of the Germanic

¹ Asser de Rebus gestis Ælfredi : "Dei dono et meo."

² Palgrave, ii. p. ccxci.

³ Textus Roffensis, p. 45. Heywood, p. 100. Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 168.

nations, the arms¹ (heregeatu, heriot²) delivered by the king to the ealdorman as well as to his other military chieftains, reverted, on the death of the receiver, to the king;³ for which, by the laws of Cnut, a fixed relief or gift out of the heritage, or from the heirs, was substituted, which for an ealdorman consisted in four saddled and as many unsaddled horses, four helmets, four coats of mail, eight spears, eight shields, four swords and two hundred mancuses of gold. Among other Germanic tribes the heriot (leergewäte) at an earlier period fell to him who inherited the land or fief of the ancestor; and in England also, at a later period, the payment or redemption, on the death of the last possessor, was, with a total disregard of the original object, converted into a pecuniary burthen on the successor on taking possession of the estate.

The other followers or retainers (comites) of the Anglo-Saxon military leaders, we find in the gesiths,⁴ more generally known under the denomination of thegns⁵ (thanes, ministeriales, servientes), a class in which the ealdormen were also comprised. The thanes are not to be reckoned among the originally noble by birth, notwithstanding their higher wergild and other privileges, by which they were distinguished from the mere freemen; but are to be regarded as only gradually becoming noble. Among this nobility by service, which

¹ Tacit. Germ. c. xiv. "Exigunt principis sui liberalitate illum bellatorem equum, illum cruentam victricemque frameam."

² See J. Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsalterthümer*, pp. 373, 567.

³ Lex. Angl. et Werin. tit. vi. art. 5. "Ad quemcunque hereditas terræ pervenerit, ad illum vestis bellica, id est lorica et ultio proximi, et solutio leudis debet pertinere." See Kelham, and Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 54.

⁴ Laws of Ine, xxiii.

⁵ From *pegnian*, to serve, minister to.

not only was not incompatible with, but presupposed, freedom of birth, the immediate thanes of the king were the highest in degree, and, from the intimate footing on which they stood to him, were often designated as his kinsmen. In Wessex and Mercia the *werigild* of these thanes, who are also designated *twelf-hynde men*,¹ was equal to that of six *ceorls* or *twy-hynde men*, viz. twelve hundred shillings. The subordinate (*medeme*, *læssan*)² thanes were not so highly privileged. To purify himself in a charge of murder, a king's thane required the oaths of twelve of his own class; while a subordinate, or mediate thane, under a similar accusation, required the oaths of eleven of his equals and of one king's thane.³ The *heriot* of these classes was also different, and in Wessex that of the lower differed not only from that of the Danes, but also from that of the Mercians and East Anglians; a circumstance of itself sufficient to render extremely questionable the opinion that *heriots* were first introduced into England by Cnut. The dignity of thane was connected with a certain possession in land. The smaller thane possessed five hides;⁴ the *ealdorman*, whose *heriot* was eight times greater, possessed forty hides.⁵ Although this principle

¹ The term '*hund*,' though originally signifying *ten*, seems here used adjectively in the sense of *hundred*, which it also bears when isolated, and not used as a prefix to the tens. Hence a *twelf-hynde man* = a *twelve-hundred man*, a *twy-hynde man*, a *two-hundred man*. See Price's note to *Laws of Ine*, liv.—T.

² Tacit. Germ. c. xiii. "*Gradus quin etiam et ipse comitatus habet.*"

³ *Laws of Ælfred and Guthrum*, iii.—T.

⁴ See Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 145. *Hide* and *hiwisc* are synonymous, as appears from tit. "*Wergilds*," vii., and seems originally to have signified an extent of land adequate to the maintenance of a family. In Kent it was denominated a *sulung* (*solin*). See *Cod. Diplom.* i. p. 249, and Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 153.—T.

⁵ *Hist. Eliens.* c. xl.

may derive its origin from the military wandering life of the Germans, when martial rank regulated the share of booty and of the conquered country,¹ it is, nevertheless, the same principle which—when through civilization, promoted by peace, fixed and assured settlements had grown into use, and the increase of the Anglo-Saxon population had rendered hereditary succession to landed property necessary (which was, moreover, favoured by the Christian clergy)—gradually converted nobility by service into nobility by birth, which even those who had entered into the ecclesiastical state did not renounce.² But the origin of the new institution was soon so greatly misunderstood, that not alone martial honour, but its external reward, was regarded as a foundation of nobility, and the possession of five hides for the king's 'utware'³ (though in the north of England, only when it had been held for three generations) raised the simple freeman from the lowly condition of ceorl to that of thane.⁴ In Wessex even the Welshman, if possessed of that quantity of land, could obtain the rank of a six-hynde man.⁵ But this land claim was only admitted in exceptional cases; and the ceorl who possessed a helmet, coat of mail, and a sword, inlaid with gold, enjoyed the rank of a Sithcundman without the otherwise requisite land. The merchant who had thrice crossed the ocean at his own charge was entitled to the rank of thane.⁶ The well-to-do middle thane, when recommended by his lord and known to the king, might rise to the rank of one

¹ Tacit Germ. c. xxvi. "Agri . . . quos inter se secundum dignitatem partiuntur."

² Leges Henrici I., lxviii. § 3.

³ Anc. LL. and Inst. tit. "Wergilds," ix. Ranks, p. 185, fol. edit. and Gloss. voce Ut-ware.—T.

⁴ Wergilds, xi.

⁵ Laws of Ine, xxiv.

⁶ Ranks, vi.

of the king's immediate thanes, in the same manner as a thane, who served the king, might be raised to that of an eorl.

The thane was constantly bound to military service, and obliged, as is evident from his heriot, to appear on horseback. Particular dues to the king seem to have been introduced at a later period. There is no reason extant for doubting¹ that every thane had the right of appearing and voting in the witenagemôt, not only of his shire, but of the whole kingdom, whenever any weighty matters of general interest were in agitation, without, however, being bound to personal attendance, the absent being considered as tacitly assenting to the resolutions of those present. Officers, whether connected with the constant personal service of the king, or only during his residence in the district of the thane, or with the administration of justice, were intrusted only to the thane, whose landed property was a sufficient guarantee for his conduct. The Anglo-Saxon thanes were in all respects the predecessors of the Norman barons.

The title of thane seems to have supplanted that of gesith,² which appears only in the earlier Anglo-Saxon laws, a denomination that may originally have designated the attendants or companions of the king, whose wergild being triple that of the simple freeman, were, therefore, denominated not only gesithcund men, but six-hynde men. This proportion in the wergild is the same as that which we find in other old Germanic

¹ Heywood's doubt (p. 191) arises from a misinterpretation of the passage in Hist. Eliens. c. xl. just cited.

² Lit. *comes itineris*, from sithian, *to journey*. The Frisian law-books make mention of the sithar, *the companion of the judge*.

laws between the noble and the free; and we here perceive how early, through the elevation of the military or serving nobility, the rank of the free burgher became changed; the former stepping into the place of the original æthelings, while even from the nobility by service a more favoured class arose above that of the old gesiths. Not all the gesiths possessed land, and, consequently, all were not in the enjoyment of the same privileges.¹ The title of 'hold,' holda, derived from the old northern (hölldr), which appears so frequently in documents connected with the north of England, no longer occurs at the period of the Conquest. 'Cild' or 'child,' as well as 'junior,' in contrast to 'senior,' may have designated a thane of inferior rank, corresponding probably to the 'puer regis' of the Salic Franks.

Among the inferior thanes may perhaps be reckoned the 'radchenistres,' whom we meet with chiefly in the parts bordering on Wales. A similar class of tenants, and probably identical with the radchenistres, were the 'radmans' or 'radmen,' who are mentioned on the borders of West Wales.²

A class of half freemen, whose name betrays their Danish origin, occurs in the north of England, called 'drenghs,' a word which, like the German Knappen (knaves) and similar designations, signified first the son, and then the servant.³ They were, it appears, bound to render military service to the proprietor of the chief manor. They are mentioned on the land between the Ribble and the Mersey, and in the vale of

¹ Comp. Heywood, c. iv.

² Heywood, p. 266. Ellis, *Intro.* i. p. 72 sq.

³ See Grimm, *Deutsche Rechtsalterthümer*, p. 305. Jameson, *Scottish Dict. voce Dring*.

the Tyne (Tynedale in Northumberland),¹ and correspond, on the Scottish frontier, to the radchenistres on the Welsh border; while the radmans occur in both districts.

In most of the counties the number of thanes was very inconsiderable. As their rank was inseparable from extent of landed property, one heir only could possess both, and the other relations continued in the condition of the unprivileged free, until the fortune of war, court service, or some lucky event exalted them. If, on the one hand, we may not exclude the thanes from among the freemen, so on the other we must as little expect to find in the subordinate majority of the latter, either constant freedom of possession or unconditional personal liberty. The freeman stands opposed both to the noble or military class, and to the unfree or servile. Riches and poverty, occupation with the sword, the plough, the scales, even among themselves, form wide and innumerable differences. The majority of those denominated free were under the protection (commendatio) of a lord (hlaford)² either temporal or ecclesiastical. Without the knowledge of the ealdorman of the shire, the vassal durst not abandon the service of his lord and seek another in another shire.³ The general name by which the simple freeman is known in the earlier Anglo-Saxon laws, is that of 'ceorl,' rarely 'frigman.' Of this class the wergild was two hundred shillings or (in Mercia) two hundred and sixty thrymsas, exactly corresponding to the simple wergild of the Angli and Warni, of the Salic Franks and of the Ripuarians. In the language of the Anglo-Saxon laws these, as we have already seen, were denominated twy-

¹ Spelman, Gloss. Ellis, Introd. i. p. 56.

² Laws of Æthelstan, l. 2.

³ Laws of Ælfred, xxxvii.

hynde men and constituted the third class of the free, of which the first and second classes were the twelfhynde and the six-hynde men. The political idea of ceorl embraced a considerable number of individuals, the majority of whom stood in the most varied relations to the persons under whom they had placed themselves. To the antithesis to, as well as to the rhyme with 'eorl,' may, perhaps, be chiefly ascribed the frequent occurrence of this word in the laws and legal fragments. The word 'ceorl' had as early as Cnut's time acquired the secondary contemptuous meaning, still attached to 'churl' as we see in Eadwig's cognomen of the 'Ceorla Cyng,' the churl king. The term is generally rendered by *villanus*, *vilain*. The number of ceorls, soon after the Norman Conquest, was, according to Domesday, nearly two-fifths of the two hundred and eighty thousand registered inhabitants. Another class, in number not much less than the foregoing, were the 'bordarii'¹ or 'bordiers,' who with the 'geburs,' the 'cotsetlas' (cotarii) and others chiefly employed on the land, were bound to the rendering of various services and imposts.² Answering to the heriot of the higher classes was the best head of cattle (old Ger., beste houbet), delivered by the heir to the lord, on the death of the tenant, or a year's rent (gafol), if he were a yearly tenant.³ The great diversity of the relations subsisting among these classes may partly arise from

¹ Bordarius is one occupying a tenement called a bord. See Gloss. to Ancient Laws and Institutes, and Ellis, Introd. i. p. 82.—T.

² See the important document entitled "Rectitudines Singularum Personarum," in Anc. LL. and Inst., and in the Rheinische Museum für Jurisprudenz, Heft 2. [also as a separate work, with an elaborate introduction by Dr. H. Leo, Halle, 1842.—T.]

³ Laws of Will. Conq. xx., and Grimm, D. R. A. p. 373.

the difference of race among the Anglo-Saxons themselves, and partly from the circumstance, that among them we have also to look for the old British inhabitants. In the class of simple freemen the burghers are comprised, of whom we shall soon have occasion to speak.

Even the indigenous Briton, whom the insolence of the conquerors stamped with the name of foreigner (Wealh, Wyliscman, Welshman), was regarded as free, and had his appropriate wergild. If the free Wealh possessed no land, his wergild was seventy shillings; if he possessed half a hide, it was eighty shillings; but if, besides paying gafol or rent to the king, he held a whole hide, his wergild then was a hundred and twenty shillings; and in the north of England two hundred and twenty shillings.¹ This position of the Welsh rent-payer (Wylisc gafolgilda) is very similar to that of the 'Romanus tributarius' and 'possessor' among the Salic Franks.² Under and after the Danish rule, the difference between the Anglo-Saxons and the British inhabitants of the country rapidly diminished, and is to be recognised only on the boundaries of the free Welsh provinces.

One class of the Anglo-Saxon population at the period of the Norman Conquest consisted of the unfree or servile (theowas, esnas), whose number, as registered in Domesday book, was little above twenty-five thousand. Of these the majority were in a state of slavery by birth, whose forefathers had been either Roman slaves, British prisoners of war, or other enemies. Others, denominated 'wite-theowas,' or penal slaves, had been freemen, but reduced by the sentence of the

¹ Laws of Ine, xxxii. Wergilds, c. vii.

² Lex Salica, tit. xliii. art. 7, 8.

law to the servile condition, on account of debt or delinquency. The master had the right of selling a theow in the country, but not beyond the sea, even if he had been guilty of a crime.¹ In other respects the condition of the servile seems to have differed little from that of the indigent free. Slaves had a special wergild, half of which fell to the master and half to the kin.

The difference of the number of servile in the several provinces is particularly remarkable. They appear most numerous in the territories where the British population maintained itself the longest, viz. in the old land of the Hwiccas, more especially in Gloucestershire, where the proportion existed of one slave to every third freeman; and in Cornwall, Devon and Staffordshire, where they were as one to five freemen. The further we remove from the Welsh border, the smaller is the proportion of the slave to the free, yet in all the Saxon states, and in Kent, it always on an average constitutes a tenth of the population as registered in Domesday. In the old East Anglia, their proportion is scarcely half of that last mentioned. It is singular, that in the eastern parts of Mercia, viz. in the shires of Lincoln, Huntingdon and Rutland, also in the extensive county of York, not a single slave is registered, and in the neighbouring counties only a very small number, as in Nottinghamshire, where they appear in the proportion of one only to two hundred and fifteen. On the other hand, we find in the last-mentioned counties the number of villeins very considerable. That slavery was unknown among the old Angles is highly improbable, though it may have been of a very light description, or may even have wholly ceased from want of re-

¹ Laws of Æthelred, xi.

plenishment by prisoners of war, as well as through the influence of the clergy.

In the laws of Kent we meet with the denomination of 'læt,' of which class it appears there were three degrees, whose wergilds were respectively eighty, sixty and forty shillings;¹ the highest of which is not equal to the half of that of the freeman. In these it is not difficult to recognise the lazzi or læti of the continental Germans, the single mention of whom in the laws of this country may, perhaps, be accounted for by the circumstance that the appellation was limited to a few unfree of kindred race brought over by the conquerors, who had become nearly extinct, or been enabled to obtain their manumission.

Manumissions were of frequent occurrence, and were greatly promoted by the clergy; though the condition of the freeman calls for little remark, as manumission speedily led to perfect freedom.

The clergy occupied an influential station among the Anglo-Saxons, which, considering the numerous calamities that had befallen them, as well as their disputes with their Scottish brethren, is the more remarkable. In explanation of this striking phenomenon among barbaric hordes, may be adduced the account given by Tacitus of the vast influence in secular affairs possessed by the pagan German priesthood, in whom exclusively resided the power of life and death. Such a primitive influence tended, no doubt, greatly to facilitate the domination of the Roman papal church, and a part of their jurisdiction, the ordeals or so-called judgments of God, may have had their origin in the legal usages of the heathen priests. Religion became a national concern, and priests enacted a principal part in the Anglo-Saxon witen-

¹ Laws of Æthelberht, xxvi.

gemôt. The rank of an archbishop was equal to that of an ætheling, of a bishop to that of an ealdorman. The bishop presided with the ealdorman in the county-court (Scir-gemôt), the jurisdiction of which was frequently co-extensive with the diocese.

The decision of important matters was never intrusted to single individuals. In such cases the ealdorman decided only with the assent of the witan of the shire; and the king himself was, in all cases affecting his people, dependent on the witan of his kingdom. These consisted of ecclesiastics and laymen, who by their offices were bound to attend in the great assembly or council of the realm (micel gemôt, micel getheat); though, besides such thanes and ecclesiastics, other free-men appear to have been entitled, by their presence and voice, to influence any decision affecting themselves.¹ That deputies chosen from the three estates met in an annual assembly of the people, as is said to have been the case among the continental Saxons,² seems more than doubtful. Even of deputies from the cities at the witenagemôt there exist no traces; though in the latter times of Saxon history the litchmen of London appear to have exercised great influence in the election of kings, at which ceremony their civic reeve (gerefa) would seem to have been present.³ The subjects for

¹ Conc. Calchut. a. 785, "in concilio publico coram rege, etc. ducibus et omni populo."

² Vita S. Lebuini a Huebaldo conscripta, in Monum. Germ. Hist. t. ii. p. 361.

³ In the Leges Henrici I. § 2, it is by no means said that civic deputies assisted at the great witenagemôt, where the tûn-gerefa and perhaps other royal officials and vassals are mentioned. The "quatuor meliores villæ," who accompanied the præpositus and the priest, are spoken of only in connection with the hundred-court.

deliberation at the great gemôts were as various as could be expected under the simple government of that time. Laws and imposts could but seldom form matter for discussion, military objects may more frequently have done so. For purely church concerns, the clergy, from an early period, had their own synods.

CHAPTER XX.

Appropriation of Land—Communal Property—Folc-land—Bôc-land—Allodium—Feudality—Division of Country in Shires—And Hundreds—Sac and Soc—Tithing Gilds—Mutual Responsibility—Frith-Cohr.

THE land conquered by the Germanic tribes belonged to them in common; hence among the Anglo-Saxons its denomination of Folc-land, or land of the people (*ager publicus*). This was the property of the community,¹ though it might either be occupied in common or possessed in severalty; in the latter case, it was probably parcelled out to individuals in the folc-gemôt, or court of the district, the grant being sanctioned by the freemen present. As long as it continued to be folc-land it could not be alienated in perpetuity; but, on the expiration of the term for which it had been granted, it reverted to the community, and might be again granted by the same authority. Folc-land was subject to many burthens and exactions. Its possessors were bound to assist in the reparation of the royal

¹ Tacit. Germ. xxvi.: "*Agri pro numero cultorum ab universis, in vices occupantur. Arva per annos mutant, et superest ager.*" See also Caesar, B. G. iv. 1, vi. 22. In the Hochwald of Thor, there is still, as I am informed by the learned investigator of our rural institutions, Baron von Haxthausen, a considerable district, in which all the lands belong to the respective communities, among whose members they are divided anew after a lapse of some years. For similar usages in Wales and Ireland, see Palgrave, i. p. 72 sq.

vills, and in other public works. They were liable to have travellers and others quartered on them. They were required to entertain kings and other great men in their progresses through the country, to furnish them with carriages and relays of horses, and to extend the same assistance to their messengers, followers and servants, and even to the persons who had charge of their horses, hawks and hounds. Such at least are the burthens from which lands were liberated on their conversion into land held by charter in perpetuity, or *bôc-land*. *Folc-land* was held by persons of the highest condition, by ealdormen, thanes and *gesiths*,¹ either during life or for a limited time,² and seems to have been originally granted to the followers of the king according to their respective ranks. Land severed from the *folc-land* and granted in perpetuity by an act of the government, and thus converted into an estate of perpetual inheritance, was denominated *bôc-land*.³ After the introduction of writing, such estates were usually created by charter (*bôc*), but were originally confirmed by the delivery of a staff, a spear, an arrow, a drinking horn, the branch of a tree or a piece of turf; and when the donation was in favour of the church, these symbolical representations of the grant were deposited with solemnity on the altar: nor was this practice entirely laid aside after the introduction of title-deeds, there being instances of it as late as the time of the Conqueror.

¹ When a *ge-ith* (as in *Laws of Ine*, xi.) is spoken of as "*unlandagende*," the expression must refer to *bôc-land*; for to suppose a *gesith* without *folc-land*, at a period when the most trifling service was rewarded with land, is hardly conceivable.

² See document in *Lye's Dictionary*, ii. Appendix ii.

³ Similar both in name and with reference to the nature of their possession, were "*libellario nomine possidentes*," and the *libellarii* of the Longobards and Franks.

Though land granted in perpetuity ceased to be folc-land, it could not with propriety be termed bôc-land, unless conveyed by a written instrument. This species of estate, which nearly corresponded to the allodium, was released from all services to the public, with the exception of contributing to the military expeditions, and to the reparation of fortresses and bridges (or the fyrd, burh-bôt and brycege-bôt), which duties or services were comprised in the phrase *trinoda necessitas*. These were incumbent on all, and none could be excused from them, though the church, in some cases, contrived to obtain an exemption from them; but, in general, its lands, like those of others, were subject to them. Bôc-land might be held by freemen of all ranks and degrees. The Anglo-Saxon kings had private estates of bôc-land which did not merge in the crown, but were devisable by will, disposable by gift or sale, and transmissible by inheritance. Many proofs of this exist, among which may be especially cited the will of king Ælfred, from which it is manifest that both he and Ecgberht, his grandfather, had the arbitrary disposal of their bôc-land.¹ Bôc-land bestowed on a third party, on the condition of reversion, was called læn-land ² (loan-land), and appears under various forms. Much folc-land was converted into bôc-land, when private property had made good its ground against common possession, and we find it recorded among the prerogatives of the king, that he could issue the documents, authorizing such conversions, although he was, at the same time, bound by the voice of his witan, who seldom failed even in

¹ Allen's Inquiry into the Rise and Growth of the Royal Prerogative in England, p. 143 sq. Kemble, Cod. Diplom. t. i. Introd. p. ciii sq.

² Heming's Cartul. v. 158.

their subscriptions to the charters, to make known that they were present, not as witnesses, but as giving their suffrage. A considerable quantity of folc-land was severed for specific purposes, as for the pay of the thanes (thegn-land), of the gerefa (gerefa-land, revel-land), or for the support of the royal table and household. The more prominently the king stood forth as the representative of the nation, the more the taxes appeared to be levied for, and the laws administered through him, and the more the army seemed to serve him, the more also the idea and name of folc-land sank into oblivion, and passed into that of the "terra regis" of Domesday. We, nevertheless, find, even in that record, some traces of folc-land, a remnant of which is preserved in the common land of cities and villages.

More important, on the other hand, became, with the completion of the ministerial system, the notion of the conferred, or lent lands, out of which the relations of feudality developed themselves. The beginnings of the feudal law and of chivalry are at an early period to be traced among the Anglo-Saxons. Thus we meet with the denominations of knights and vassals (milites, vassalli) in the time of king Ælfred,¹ and, instead of the old German usage of qualifying a youth for the military service by a decree of the people, we find the investiture with a knightly belt,² by the hand of the Anglo-Saxon king, or the consecration of a sword by the clergy.³ Similar ceremonies took place on the investiture of ealdormen. The feudal obligations are declared

¹ Asser, Vita Ælfredi, a. 878 [May not the use of the term 'vassalli' be adduced as an argument in their favour by those inclined to question the genuineness of the work ascribed to Asser?—T.] ² See above, p. 124. ³ *Ingulph.*

in the following oath of homage (hyld-ath): "By the Lord, before whom this relic is holy, I will be to N. faithful and true ['hold' and 'getriwe'], and love all that he loves, and shun all that he shuns [ascuniam], according to God's law, and according to the world's usages, and never, by will nor by power, by word nor by work, do aught that is hateful to him; on condition that he keep me as I am willing to deserve, and fulfil all that was agreed on, when I submitted to him and chose his will."¹

In no country are the old German institutions, both political and legal, in general cases to be so easily traced as in England, although in particular cases great difficulties present themselves to the inquirer. Above all things, care must be taken not to base every institution on one and the same artificially formed principle, but rather to bear in mind, in the first place, that many centuries lie before us, in the course of which several of the institutions known to us have first received their completion, and sometimes had their origin; and secondly, that the original institutions of the conquering Angles and Saxons result as well from the necessities of warfare as from the patriarchal legal relations, which again present themselves in times of peace.

The original formation of the larger divisions, the shires, out of the petty kingdoms of Kent, Sussex, Essex and Surrey, and of such earlier ones as that of the North and South folk in East Anglia, or as in the gradually conquered Welsh and other foreign districts, as the territories of the Defnsætas, Cumbrians, etc., is a subject deserving of attention. The disproportion in extent of the shires to one another

¹ Anc. LL. and Inst. tit. "Oaths."

is less in Wessex than in Mercia and the north, and has in some cases where it existed been remedied, by Ælfred apparently in the first instance, and at a later period by Eadric Streona, by whom the former Winchelcombshire¹ was annexed to that of Gloucester. A mutual influence also of the divisions of shire and diocese on one another is too manifest to be overlooked in those shires which bear the name of their episcopal capital, as is most striking in the land of the Hwiccas, which accurately corresponds to the shire and diocese of Worcester. In the mature Anglo-Saxon constitution, there was held, in the place of the earlier national assembly, a half-yearly *gemôt* of the *scir-witan*, or county-court, at which the bishop and the ealdorman (afterwards the earl) presided,² and in which the *gerefa* (the reeve of a later period) was a constant assessor, afterwards a joint president, and at length the sole presiding officer. The thanes assisted in person, and the inclosed districts (*tunscipas*) were each represented by its *gerefa* and four men.

The *Gerefa* (Reeve) of the Anglo-Saxons bore, in many respects, a striking resemblance to the *Graphio* of the old German law. He was the official appointed by the king, whose province it was to carry into execution the judgments of the courts presided over by the ealdorman and other high dignitaries, to levy distresses, exact the imposts, contributions and tithes; while he had also the custody of prisoners.³ Besides

¹ Hemingi Cartul. p. 280.

² Eadgar's Laws, II. 5. Æthelred, III. 3. For the proceedings of a *scirgemôt* in Cnut's time, see Hickes, Dissert. Epist. p. 2.

³ Lambarde derives the title of '*gerefa*' from *reafian*, *spoliare*, whence its primitive significations of *spoliator*, *exactor*. Suger also (De Administr. c. xxiii.) has "*exactores regii, quos dicunt graf-*

this gerefafa, who was distinguished by the title of scir-gerefafa (whence our *sheriff*) and cyninges (king's) gerefafa, there were other inferior gerefafas, as the tûn-gerefafa (the *tunginus* of the Franks), the wic-, port-, burh-gerefafa, who were all the fiscal officers of their respective jurisdictions. It appears also that each bishop, hlaforð, or gesithcund man had his gerefafa or agent, who could represent him on certain occasions, make oath for him, and was a sort of steward or bailiff.¹ A certain possession of land, distinguished by the name of geref-land, was attached to the office of gerefafa, which seems to have been abstracted from the thegn-land by the gerefafas for their own emolument.² Although the office of the scir-gerefafa was in time much enlarged, and finally substituted for that of the ealdorman's, his title was never synonymous with that of the latter; and he was never designated as comes, although possibly as 'vice-comes.' In other Germanic lands we may recognise the ealdorman in the later *dux*, *satraps*, *senior*, *comes*, often associated with the gerefafa, or graf, but always taking precedence of him. In course of time we find the ealdorman elected by gilds and other associations in towns, and serving under various relations, but always distinct from, although together with the king's officers. As the dignity of the gerefafa or graf is spoken of among the continental Franks before we have any mention of it in Britain, it is probable that the Saxons and Anglo-Saxons derived it from their Frankish neighbours, although the

fiones." [Grimm (D. R. A. p. 753) proposes another etymon, which seems hardly admissible.—T.]

¹ Laws of Ine, lxiii. Laws of Æthelred, I. i.

² See Allen's Inquiry, and Ellis, Introd. i. p. 231.

agreement among both peoples in regard to the attributes of this officer is too striking not to lead to the inference of a more ancient common origin. If the name only has been borrowed from the Franks, we are led to ask what a *gerefa* was called in earlier times by the Anglo-Saxons; while if the entire system, as we find it among that people, have been derived from the Franks, the latter must also have had the higher office of the ealdorman.

Among the oldest divisions of the land may be reckoned the *Mægth*, a district occupied by the members of one race, who having fought and conquered together in war, established their abode on the same spot in time of peace. We find this designation more commonly in the larger provinces occupied by the Saxons than in the lands of the Angles. That a real affinity existed among the individuals of the *mægth*, though scarcely to be traced among the Anglo-Saxons, is evident from the examples that might be given of their several family associations, even in the later middle ages.

The division of the country into Hundreds, like that of the Northern kingdoms into *Herreds*, originated in the old military constitution.¹ Both names were given to districts which chose a hundred men, for the protection of the ealdorman and as counsellors; though it is already remarked by Tacitus, that the real number did not always correspond with the name. The fluctuating state of the population, as well as the exigencies of a constitution developing itself under a long state of peaceful possession, have occasioned great

¹ This is most apparent among the West Goths. See Legg, *Visigoth.* l. ix. tit. 2. c. 1, 3, 5. Cf. J. M. Velschow, *De Dalorum Institutis Militaribus.* Ha. iæ, 1831.

changes with respect to all offices based on numerical relations. The appointment of a hundred men may often have stood in connection with the same number of free families, or with so many hides: but, it must be confessed, that what originally constituted the hundred is extremely doubtful, and the more so, as, since the Norman Conquest, their names and boundaries, and sometimes even their number, have undergone frequent and considerable changes. In Northamptonshire, at least, the hundreds, in the time of Eadward the Confessor, appear to have consisted each of a hundred hides.¹ The circumstance that some of the smaller shires contain the greatest number of hundreds, presents inexplicable difficulties;² though, at the same time, it may afford a clue to their origin, if we take into consideration the fact, that these smaller counties (*viz.* Kent containing sixty-one, Sussex sixty-five, and Dorsetshire thirty-four hundreds) were the districts first conquered, and, therefore, the most densely peopled by the new settlers; while in others, as Lancashire, with six hundreds only, where the British population continued more numerous, the hundreds, on the division of the country among the Anglo-Saxon chiefs, might have been formed without any reference to the number of the subjected Britons. The meeting of the hundred was held monthly for objects of voluntary and contentious jurisdiction.³ The presiding officer was the ealdorman, assisted by the bishop of the diocese

¹ Ellis, *Introductio*. i. p. 184 sq.

² See Hallam, *Europe during the Middle Ages*, ii. p. 391.

³ Tacit. *Germ.* xi. "Coeunt . . . certis diebus, quum aut inchoatur luna aut impletur." A greve (*gerefa*) of the hundred is mentioned only in the laws called Edward the Confessor's (xxxii.), the *aldremannus hundreti* in LL. Hen. I. xci. § 1.

and the principal thanes.¹ The townships were each represented by their reeve and four deputies.²

A division in the north of England corresponding to the hundred was the wapentake, so named, as we are informed, from the ceremony which took place on the inauguration of the chief magistrate, who, dismounting from his horse, fixed his spear in the earth, which was touched by the spears of all present.³

In Kent there are several hundreds united under the appellation of 'lathes,' which had the jurisdiction of hundreds, and in which may be recognised the Northern 'lething,' or military levy.⁴ In Sussex is found the division into six rapes. It does not appear that to this division any jurisdiction was annexed, which belonged to the hundred.⁵ In the shires of York and Lincoln a division into three parts took place, called 'trehing' or 'treding,' whence apparently the modern *ridings* of the first-mentioned county.

The districts above enumerated comprised the inhabitants of all ranks with reference to matters of war and government, but not wholly with respect to jurisdiction. Many possessions belonging to the king, to the clergy, and to the nobility, were, in a greater or less degree, exempted from the jurisdiction of the hundred, and exercised their own. This privilege was called 'saca,'⁶ the Anglo-Saxon expression for *lis*, *querela*, and answers, in my opinion, to the privileges of the *sagibarones* of

¹ Laws of Eadgar, II. 5. Sec. LL. of Cnut, xviii.

² LL. Henrici I. vii. § 7.

³ LD. Edw. Conf. xxx. Ellis, *Intro.* i. p. 180 sq.

⁴ Ellis, i. p. 179. Jüt. Low, iii. 2.

⁵ Ellis, i. p. 180. According to the Grágás a 'hreppr' was a district in which twenty or more 'bondes,' or peasants, maintained one poor person.

⁶ Saca, in judicial language, signifies *cause*, Ger. *Sache*.

the Salic Franks. The district over which the right of *saca* was exercised, was denominated '*soca*,' '*soen*' (*soke*, sanctuary), also '*sithesocna*,' in which last term is to be recognised a reference to the *sith* or *gesith*, rendering the supposition probable, that such a jurisdiction had been detached from the hundred before the title of *gesith* had been supplanted by that of *thegn* (*thane*). The *ceorls* dwelling on such possessions were denominated *socmen*. Courts of this description were holden in the hall of the privileged individual, and were from that circumstance called *hallmotes*. They still exist in the courts *baron* for civil causes.

A very important branch of Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence, though enveloped in considerable obscurity, and, therefore, not unfrequently misunderstood, is the system of responsibility, by which every free member of the community above twelve years old was bound, on peril of forfeiture of his '*lâd*,' or right of compurgation, or of the protection of his '*wer*,' to enrol himself in a hundred or *tything* (*teothung*) which should be surety for him, and, in case of an accusation against him, should present him to justice.¹ This regulation did not of course apply to those individuals who, by rank, family connection, or commendation, were exempted from the provisions of this and similar enactments. Thus a master of a family was answerable for the misdeeds of his wife, his children under age, his household and slaves, even for damage done by his cattle, in fact for all and everything under his protection (*mund*, *mundbyrd*), or that belonged to him, and whose *wergild*, consequently, fell to him. Of a less comprehensive nature was the reciprocal respon-

¹ Sec. LL. of Cnut, xx. LL. Hen. I. viii. § 2. Palgrave, v. i. c. 6, and v. ii. p. cxx.

sibility of family or kin (*mægburh*),¹ which chiefly comprised the obligation of avenging the slain, the protection of minors in the administration of their property, and the payment of half the *wergild*, if one of the *mægburh* committed a homicide and fled from justice;² and, on the other hand, the right of receiving the *wergild* for a slain kinsman, of which two-thirds fell to the relations on the male side, and one-third to those on the female.³

With the development of the Anglo-Saxon states and the intermixture with Britons and Danes, this legal responsibility founded on kinship lost a considerable part of its influence, and artificial relations or connections took the place of this rapidly decreasing patriarchal feeling. The wealthy lord of the soil, the feudal superior, took all his vassals or subjects (*hyrede*) under his protection, as the kin had formerly done, and undertook the obligation of presenting them, if accused, to justice, and to pay the *wergild* of the homicide who had fled; while, on the other hand, the responsibility which the kindred of his vassals had formed among themselves was now given to the *hlaford*, who represented them in the state, or the hundred. The relations of the criminal also paid the *wergild* to him, a part of which only fell to the kindred of the slain. But even this institution was insufficient for the great number of freemen, who were not included in any of these associations. In the Frankish empire vassals were placed under the obligatory protection of their lord, but in England a different system was adopted, more in harmony with its freer institutions; and here recourse was had to an old, and probably an

¹ Laws of Æthelstan, V. viii. 2. Edm. S. i. Ine, lxxiv.

² Laws of Æthelb. xxiii.

³ LL. of Edw. and Guth. xiii.

originally military, division of the country into tythings, in one of which every freeman whose rank and possessions were not in themselves a sufficient guarantee for his good conduct was enrolled. Every ten freemen formed a tything (teothung),¹ one of whom was the chief or tything-man (tyenthe heued, decanus),² corresponding to the 'Contubernium' and its 'caput' in the later military system of the Romans, and whose military origin, under its subsequent transformation into the watch and ward on the public ways, was long to be traced, until at last even the leader of the men of the hundred, the 'comes stabuli,' degenerated into that subordinate police officer, the constable.³ It is not improbable that these tythings were at an early period bound for the wergild of their members, and entitled to the same, as we find in the old German laws very strict enactments for the payment of wergilds and compensations by nine fellows of the murderer, of the burglar, and of the ravisher;⁴ hence these tythings must have formed a very close bond of union between the various members, all of whom were liable to be called upon to participate in or hinder enterprises which might endanger their lives, the nine brethren being held by law as co-partners in the guilt of the tenth brother.

The older laws of the Anglo-Saxons contain no mention of tythings (teothunga), but speak of gild-brethren (gegyldan), who, in the case of homicide committed by one of them not having paternal relations, paid one-third of the wer, and the relatives

¹ Sec. Laws of Crut, xx.

² LL. Edw. Conf. xxvii. xxviii.

³ Palgrave (i. p. 200) has already remarked that *tything* and *ward* were in the ancient law synonymous.

⁴ Lex Salica, tit. xiv. xlv. xlv.

one-third. If the man had no relatives, half his wer was paid by the gild-brethren.¹

The gild-brethren here mentioned were probably the members of such peace-gilds (frith-gild) as those which existed in London,² and possibly in other large cities in the reign of Æthelstan, and, perhaps, also in other cities and large towns; though, at the same time, it is evident that every freeman could not be included in a gild, which entailed obligations that could only be imposed on those who, as in the case of the civic gilds, possessed peculiar means of control over their members. Hence, after the reign of Æthelstan, we meet with various enactments to compel every non-exempted freeman to find a surety (borh),³ which in the southern parts of England was to be found in the tythings, termed in this acceptation 'frith-borhs,'⁴ or sureties for the peace, and by the Anglo-Normans, franc-pledge. In Northumbria, some parts of Mercia and Shropshire, this institution either did not exist,⁵ or, as the frith-borh of York is said to have been denominated 'tienmanna tale,' was probably at an early period abolished.⁶ This institution, called by the moderns *collective frankpledge*, was limited to the production of the offender to justice, if he had fled.⁷ If the members were remiss in seeking the culprit, or suffered him to escape, they were liable to certain penalties, and, in cases of theft, to indemnification.⁸ This indemnification

¹ Laws of Ælfred, xxvii. xxviii.

² Jud. Civit. Londoniæ.

³ Laws of Eadgar, II. vi.

⁴ Some texts of the laws of the Confessor, instead of 'friðborg,' erroneously read 'freoburg' and 'friborg,' whence the translation or perversion into 'francplegium,' 'francpledge' of the Norman period.—T.

⁵ Palgrave, i. pp. 196, 202.

⁶ LL. Edw. Conf. xx.

⁷ Laws of Æthelred, I. i.

⁸ Laws of Eadgar, II. vi. Cnut, Sec. xx. Edw. Conf. xx.

was, in the case of stolen cattle, so considerable, that, like the fire-assurances of modern times, it encouraged neglect in the proprietors, and not unfrequently still grosser abuses.¹ The responsibility of the tything extended to the whole village community, and even to cases when it was uncertain whether the offender was a member of the tything or not. The community which did not within a month and a day discover the slayer of a person found murdered within their boundary, was compelled to pay a sum of forty-six marks, of which forty fell to the king, and the remaining six to the relations of the slain, if the murderer could not be found and brought to justice within a year.² This greater severity with regard to the frith-borh, and even the name itself, we discern, however, only in the Norman period, and it seems highly probable that the frith-gilds and teothungs of the Anglo-Saxons were used by the Normans for the purpose both of weakening the ties of kinship among the conquered, and of establishing a more stringent polity. This may explain why the frankpledge was most completely established in the provinces which were first thoroughly subjected to the Normans.

¹ Jud. Civit. Lundoniæ, viii. 7.

² Edw. Conf. xv.

CHAPTER XXI.

Freemen—Wergild—Compensation—The Mund—Guardianship—
 Marriage—Rights—Pledges—Charters—Succession—Contracts
 —Crimes and Punishments—Justice—Judges—Oaths—Ordeals
 —Juries—Supreme Courts.

OUR knowledge of the laws of the Anglo-Saxons is more limited than might have been expected on a comparison with our knowledge of their history. With them it was not as with the other Germanic races, who recorded what was most essential for the security of their rights; but the laws of the Anglo-Saxons that have been preserved have usually for object only the introduction of new regulations or the establishment of doubtful legal principles which had been brought under consideration through the connection with the Danes. It was only under the Normans, and in consequence of the new legal views introduced by them, that a copious publication of Anglo-Saxon law took place, into which much was introduced that was new and foreign, as well as much erroneous matter, arising from misinterpretation.¹ At the same time, notwithstanding the incompleteness of our knowledge of Anglo-Saxon law from these causes, and from the loss of the original Mercian as well as of the greater part of the Northumbrian laws, the

¹ It seems hardly necessary to remark that the author here alludes to the laws called Edward the Confessor's and Henry the First's.—T.

materials we possess fully enable us to perceive its accordance with the laws of the other Germanic nations, and,—considering that these laws, as well as other legal documents, are for the most part composed in the Anglo-Saxon tongue,—to pronounce them as one of the most important sources of old Germanic law. The history of the Anglo-Saxon law possesses considerable interest for English history, by indicating in the most incontrovertible manner the basis of the later relations between the Normans and Anglo-Saxons. Some observations yet remain to be made in regard to their most essential points of agreement, and their respective peculiarities. These, however, have hitherto been left untouched as appertaining rather to the province of history than of law, while a systematic review of the Anglo-Saxon law comes not within the scope of the present work, and has, moreover, by some able scholars of Germany, been rendered more familiar and accessible to the natives of that country than it is to the English themselves.¹

The freeman's original position in the state was that of one of a family, whose members were bound to give mutual aid against violence. This obligation, however, had reference solely to acts of unlawful violence, and was more and more limited by laws enacted for the purpose of diminishing the number of feuds, while a procedure was laid down for the tribunals (*witan*), whereby the homicide could, through his mediator (*forespreca*), obtain peace and security, and the injured relatives the legal *wergild*. The relations of the slain

¹ See the works of Philipps on the Anglo-Saxon and the English laws under the Normans, as well as his *German History*; also Schmid's treatises in *Hermes*, vols. xxxi. and xxxii., his edition of the Anglo-Saxon laws, and Grimm's *Deutsche Rechtsalterthümer*.

received the whole wergild (*wer*, *leod*)¹ annexed to his rank in the community. On the other hand, it was incumbent on the kindred of the homicide to present him to justice, that he might pay the wergild.² If he fled, his kinsmen paid the half of the wergild; exile and the loss of family and friends being considered an equivalent for the other half. If he had only maternal relatives, they paid a third of the wergild, and his gild-brethren a third; if he had no relatives, his gild-brethren paid half; his flight in either case being reckoned as an equivalent for the remainder.³ If the slayer did not flee, the kindred of the slain might grant him time for the payment of the *wer*, or his own kin might altogether renounce him.⁴ It was only in cases of poisoning, and base, secret murder (*morth*), that the kinsmen, besides other mulcts, had to pay the whole wergild.⁵

Previously to paying the wergild, the king's '*mund*' (a fine to the king for breach of his protection) was to be levied; after which, within twenty-one days, the '*healsfang*' (*apprehensio colli*, *collistrigium*⁶) was to be discharged, and after that, within twenty-one days, the '*manbôt*,' or indemnity to the lord of the slain for the loss of his man, the amount of which was regulated by that of the '*wer*,' being thirty shillings for a *ceorl*, eighty for a *six-hynde* man, and a hundred and twenty for one of *twelf-hynde* degree. In addition to all these,

¹ '*Wer*' and '*leod*' signify *man*, but are frequently used for wergild, '*leodgild*,' the payment, or worth of a man.

² Laws of Eadw. and Guth. xiii. Eadm. Sec. i. 7. Hen. I. lxxvi. 6.

³ Laws of Ælf. xxvii. xxviii.

⁴ Laws of Eadm. Sec. I. vii. Eadw. and Guth. xiii.

⁵ Laws of Æthels. II. vi.

⁶ A mulct in commutation of the pillory, or some similar punishment. See Glossary to Ancient Laws and Institutes.—T.

there was still the 'fyht-wite' due to the crown for the breach of the peace, which, as well as the manbôt, could never be remitted.¹

It was the right and duty of every head of a family to protect those placed *in his hand*, or 'mund,'² or under his 'mundbyrd' or guardianship, whether wife, children or slaves. A boy's accountability, his capability of bearing arms, and of the management of his property began, according to the earlier laws, in his tenth, but according to the laws of Æthelstan, in his twelfth year.³ The accountability of children was extended even to the infant in the cradle, whereby, in the case of theft committed by the father, they, like those of mature age, were consigned to slavery, but this cruel practice was by a law of Cnut strictly forbidden.⁴ This premature majority of the Anglo-Saxon youth accounts for the early accession to the throne of some of the kings, as Eadward the Martyr, who was crowned in his thirteenth year. Majority at the age of ten is not mentioned in any other Germanic laws, excepting those of the West Goths, and even there appears only as an exception in favour of the young testator, or the son whose father could not, or would not support him. The beginning of the thirteenth year as that of majority is strictly and universally Germanic.⁵

After the father's death the child remained with the mother, though the management of the property or paternal domain (*frumstól*) devolved on the paternal

¹ Laws of Eadw. and Guth. xii. Eadm. Sec. iii. vii.

² The original signification of 'mund' is hand.

³ Laws of Hloth. and Ead. vi. Ine, vii. Æthels. V. i. By the Salic law also (tit. xxvi. art. 6) twelve was fixed as the age of responsibility.

⁴ See Laws of Cnut, lxxvii.

⁵ See Grimm, D. E. A. p. 413 sq.

relations, who were obliged to give sufficient security (borh) before the Shire gemôt for the faithful discharge of their duty.¹

Marriage was contracted after the bridegroom, in preliminary arrangements with the friends of the bride, had settled the purchase-price, which belonged to the relation in whose guardianship the woman was at the time of her betrothal; and also the dowry (morgen-gifu) for the future wife, in which was comprised a jointure for her, consisting frequently in lands, in the case of her surviving her husband.² This purchase-money, in consideration of which the family of the woman intrusted the tutelage of their relation to the bridegroom, appears identical with the 'mund' of the Longobards and the 'mundr' of the Scandinavian nations.³ The more family connection prevailed, and the earlier and oftener, under a life of war and wandering, the married daughters, widowed or forsaken, returned to the guardianship of their paternal kindred, the more important a consideration was the purchase-money, the application of which was, at least in part, similar to that of the morgen-gifu or dowry; but afterwards, under the security afforded by peaceful regular governments, the morgen-gifu grew into an object of greater importance, while the purchase-price became a symbol, or was left entirely to the good-will of the bridegroom.⁴ The 'mund' of a widow about to engage in a second marriage was fixed by the law, in proportion to the rank of her first husband.⁵ For the fulfilling of these conditions, sureties and pledges were

¹ Laws of Hloth. and Had. vi. Ine, xxxviii. Hen. I. lxx. § 18.
Laws of Eadm. (Betrothing).

² Laws of Æthelb. lxxv. and Price's note thereon.

³ See Laws of Cnut, lxxiv.

⁴ Laws of Æthelb. lxxv.

given. If a man betrothed did not complete his engagement within a prescribed time, he had, nevertheless, to pay the purchase-money, and make compensation (*bôt*) both to the woman or her family, and also to his sureties, for his breach of faith (*borh-bryce*).¹ The property which the bride received from her father as a portion (*fioh*, like the Longobardic *fader-fio*, in contradistinction to the *met-fio*, or purchase-money) returned, after the death of a childless widow, to her relations, who also received her *morgen-gifu*. A similar law existed among the Ostphalians and Angrians.²

Prohibitions of marriage on account of too near relationship were introduced by the Christian clergy, though reasons were found for setting some limits to such restrictions.³ Voluntary separations also were allowed, in which case the wife, if the children remained with her, was entitled to half the property; if they continued with the father, her portion was equal to that of one child.⁴

Obedience to the husband required by the law was so strict, that the wife was not bound to denounce a theft committed by her husband; ⁵ we do not, however, find among the Anglo-Saxons any traces that the husband possessed the power of selling his wife.

The Anglo-Saxon form of betrothal is no longer extant; though the accordance of several very old, alliterative, rhythmic formulas in some parts of England, in use before the Reformation, justify us in

¹ Laws of Ine, xxxi.

² Laws of Æthelb. lxxxii. *Lex Saxonum*, tit. viii, art. 2.

³ Bedæ Hist. Eccl. i. 27.

⁴ Laws of Æthelb. lxxix, lxxx.

⁵ Laws of Ine, lvii.

assuming that they are all imitations of the Anglo-Saxon. Their earnestness and dignity remind us most strikingly of the observations made by Tacitus on the entrance into the married state among the Germans, which seem to prove his acquaintance with the form of betrothal of that people.¹

On the rights of things there is little to notice, as we have already spoken of the state of landed property under the last head. The conveyance of property, particularly of landed possessions, was sometimes symbolical, through the delivery of a helmet, a sword, a bow, an arrow, or whatever else could be preserved as a memorial; and sometimes by means of a formula, the rhythms of which may still frequently be traced in Anglo-Saxon documents.²

Conveyances by written documents were also common, and we still possess, both in the native and in the Latin tongue, a vast number of charters of the Anglo-Saxon times, some reaching back to the preaching of the Christian faith in England, under pope Gregory the First. The interest of the Anglo-Saxon written documents is the greater at the present day, as no records in any other Germanic tongue are extant of an earlier date than the thirteenth century; though it

¹ Thus, according to the usage of Salisbury, the bride's answer was, "I take thee, John, to be my wedded husband—to have and to hold—fro' this day forwards—for better for worse—for richer for poorer—in sycknesse in hele—to be bonere and buxom—in bedde and at borde—till death do us part, if Holy Church it well ordain—and thereto I plight thee my troth." See Palgrave, ii. p. cxxxv. sq. So Tacitus (Germ. xviii.) to the same effect: "*Mulier . . . ipsis incipientis matrimonii auspiciis admonetur, venire se laborum periculorumque sociam, idem in pace, idem in prælio passuram ausuramque . . . sic vivendum, sic pereundum.*"

² See Ancient LL. and Inst. p. 78, fol. ed. Hearne's Textus Roffensis, p. 51. Palgrave, ii. p. cxxxiv.

must be observed, that of the former the originals rarely exist, and that many, particularly those finely illuminated, and written with golden characters, have been fabricated after the Conquest, for the purpose of imposing on the new lords of the soil.

The sale of landed property was conditional on the consent of the next heir. A state of things based in so great a degree on joint associations of every kind must have given rise to many a common possession and various privileges, which will probably be better understood when the information to be derived from the charters is given us in a condensed form. The seller gave security (*borh*) to the buyer and pledged himself to defend the sold property against unlawful claims, under a considerable penalty.¹ The seller of a moveable chattel, which was claimed by a third party, if he could not produce the party from whence he had it, or otherwise clear himself, was considered the thief.²

The law of pledges was in very early stages of society of considerable importance, as the want of a circulating medium gave constant occasion for them, and the judge, through want of other means of coercion and punishment, was often compelled to have recourse to them; and even to the individual it was necessary to give the right of sureties in many cases, where a better ordered government would apply milder, yet, at the same time, more effectual means for preserving the public peace. The legal procedure required a pledge (*wed*) from him whose cause rendered the fixing of a second hearing necessary, proportionate to the value of the matter in dispute. When Godwine presented himself before the *witena-gemôt*, he deposited the

¹ Laws of Æthels. I. x. Æthelr. I. iii.

² Laws of Æthelr. II. ix

most costly treasures as a pledge.¹ If any one, when accused before a tribunal, did not appear, he was compelled to give pledge to the accuser, which right, in the case of distraint (*nam, namium*), was by Cnut permitted only after the fourth fruitless citation.² He who engaged to undergo an ordeal gave a pledge.³ In the case of injuries received through cattle, the owner was forced to give the injured person a pledge for a much larger sum than the value of the animals. An interval of nine days was, however, allowed for the redeeming of this pledge. It would seem that the presence of the shire-reeve or that of the wick-reeve or his substitute was necessary at such pledgings in order to guard against outbreaks of arbitrary power or violence.

The endeavours of historical inquirers to obtain a clear insight into the Anglo-Saxon law of succession have hitherto been unsuccessful. The cause of their failure may probably lie in the diverse nature of property subject to change with every political mutation. Inheritance among a wandering people is naturally confined to moveable possessions: to land it can only extend itself, when, from a state of common national property, a conquered country gradually passes into that of permanent private possession. The land granted by the people on its acquisition by conquest (*folcland*), which at a later period was supplanted by the royal benefices or fiefs, could with the obligations attached to it, be inherited only by the nearest of kin in the male line, or perhaps, as a common property, by the sons; herein bearing much resemblance to the

¹ G. Gaimar, v. 4881 sq. Laws of Æthelr. III. xii.

² Laws of Ine, vii. Cnut, Sect. xix.

³ Laws of Æthels. I. xxiii.

terra Salica of the Salic Franks, and the *terra aviatica* of the Ripuarians, to which, unlike the alod or allodium, only the male line or spear-side could succeed.¹ At the period when the laws were committed to writing, the case of a father inheriting from his son was not possible, which is remarked as usual in the instance of alods; and in general, the several kinds of succession to folcland are mentioned as occasional only in cases of alodial possessions. These latter consisted both in arms, ornaments, slaves, domestic animals and other moveable property, and in immoveable property, which could be inherited or otherwise acquired. Such land estates were among the Anglo-Saxons generally known by the name of bôcland. Right of succession to alodial property was possessed in common and equally by those nearest of kin to the possessor, under certain conditions respecting arms and female paraphernalia. Bôcland could be devised to women;² though for succession to alodial land also, principles were soon established, in a still warlike age, which nearly resembled those peculiar to folcland and fiefs. Bôcland bequeathed to females was considered as given only in usufruct, and reverted to the male line. It was not till the fifth generation that bôcland could unrestrictedly fall from the spear-side to the spindle-side.³

The obligation of vengeance for blood, the right to the wergild and a share in joint compurgatory oaths, stood in close connection with the law of succession, and also prove the preference enjoyed by the male line, which was entitled to two-thirds of the composition for

¹ LL. Hen. I. lxx. §§ 20-22.

² See Ælfred's Testament.

³ In the language of the French jurists, "tomber de lance en quenouille." LL. Hen. I. lxx. § 21. "Non mittat extra cognationem suam, sicut prediximus (§ 20) in quintum geniculum."

homicide, while one-third only fell to relatives on the female side.¹

If the woman survived her childless husband, she was entitled to half the property; if there were children, to the whole, unless she entered a second time into wedlock within the year of mourning.²

Concerning contracts and their ratification many enactments are extant. Cattle, if proved to be unsound within thirty days of being purchased, might be returned to the seller, unless the latter could swear that he knew not of its unsoundness when he sold it.³ The want of a coinage of the larger moneys caused, through the employment of other means of payment, a constant necessity for technical written contracts.

Sureties were very frequent, both from the circumstance just mentioned, and also from the peculiar old legal practice of the Germanic nations; though in cases of individual surety, unless in those of indemnification for money or other things, we find them, like the general sureties, usually limited to the production of offenders to justice.

The perpetration of prohibited acts subjected the offender to various pecuniary mulcts, as well as to bodily penalties and loss of liberty. Capital punishments were, as among the ancient Germans, inflicted only in cases of foul murder (morth), arson and theft;⁴ though even in these the punishment was left to the will and execution of the injured party, who was not bound to accept any wergild. For the more atrocious crimes, the customary punishment was banishment,

¹ LL. Hen. I. lxxxviii. § 11.

² Laws of Eadm. (Betrothing). Cnut, Sec. lxxiv.

³ Laws of Ine, lvi.

⁴ Laws of Edw. and Guth. xi. Æthels. I. i. V. vi. Cnut, Sec. lxxv.

under which the criminal was declared an outlaw, 'utlage,' or according to the legal language of the time, was said to bear a wolf's head.¹ No one might conceal such a man, and any one was licensed to slay him, if, being found in the country, he attempted to defend himself.² Cutting off the hands and feet was also ordained for theft. The Anglo-Saxon list or tariff of indemnities for wounds and other bodily injuries is almost as copious as that of the Frisians. On almost every part and particle of the body, even the several teeth and nails, a valuation was set. The compensations, though differing from those of other nations,³ are alike in their objects. The wounding or disfigurement of the face, under the technical name of *wlite-wamm*, we find here as well as among the Icelanders, Anglians, Old-Saxons and Frisians. We may in this place make the remark, that neither here, nor throughout the whole written legislation of the Anglo-Saxons, do we meet with much that is symbolical, or that betokens very remote antiquity, but we everywhere note a striving for exact definitions, and a consequent tendency to interpret different degrees of injury by quantitative and monetary definitions. Various ancient forms of compensation, or fines, have not been referred to in the older laws, being sometimes founded only on usage, as for instance the fine for killing a swan, which consisted in covering with corn the bird suspended by its beak. In the request made by the mother of the

¹ LL. Edw. Conf. vi.

² Laws of Ine, xviii. xxxvii. Ælfr. vi. etc.

³ Yet not in all cases: e.g. the striking off and mutilation of the ear were respectively paid for with twelve and six shillings (Laws of Æthelb. xxxix.-xlii.), as in the *Lex Alaman.* tit. lx. c.1-3, and higher, if the hearing were destroyed. See Price's note.

last Anglo-Saxon king to redeem her son's dead body with an equal weight in gold, we have also, perhaps, a relic of the ancient practice of paying a fine for a slain man by giving an equal weight of the precious metal.

Judicature in its whole compass was centred in the hundreds or wapentakes, or in those exempted districts which enjoyed the privileges of hundreds. In both the one and the other it appears, however, that the finding of a verdict was not the business of every person present, but of a committee, usually consisting of twelve of the principal thanes, and sometimes of double and even triple that number.¹ This committee was, however, appointed chiefly for the discovery or investigation of offences committed within the district; but with the establishment of the offence judgment was passed on the perpetrator. These thanes swore to accuse no guiltless man, and to conceal no crime. It appears that this committee at first submitted its judgments to the gemôt, for the confirmation or prevention of the ordeal, and execution of solemn judicial procedures. An appropriate name for the members of such committees, corresponding to the Nefndir of the Scandinavian nations, does not appear; but when they occur as an order, whose members have almost the character of judges, the name of lahmen seems to have been given to them.² The voice of two-thirds of these thanes was a valid judgment: those outvoted were subject to a pecuniary mulct.³

¹ Laws of Æthelr. III. iii. Wilkins, *Præf. ad LL. Anglo-Sax.* Palgrave, i. pp. 100, 216, where the appointment of twelve thanes is compared with similar institutions in other countries: to the instances there cited may be added that of the Nemedes of twelve judges in Dithmarschen.

² Ordinance respecting the Dunsætas, iii.

³ Laws of Æthelr. III. xiii.

Legal proceedings were commenced by the accused giving sureties or pledges for his appearance on the day of trial.¹ The institution of consacramentals, or compurgators in suits, originated in the primitive obligation on the kindred to aid their relative with arms, which was now softened down into a judicial defence by oath.

If one individual accused another of crime or delinquency, he was required to take an oath (*for-ath*) that he accused not out of hatred or envy, or unlawful lust of gain. Seven compurgators must then on oath declare their belief in the truth of this declaration. If the accused was under a *hlaforð* or lord, either he, or his *gerefa*, might come forward and swear that the accused had failed neither in oath nor ordeal since the last *gemôt*. After which the accused *ceorl* or *gesithcund* man might clear himself of the charge by his oath (*lâd*),² supported by the oaths of a certain number of compurgators, or by the simple ordeal. The value of the oath depended on the rank of the accused, being equal to his *wergild*, so that the oath of a simple freeman, or *twy-hynde* man, was valued at two hundred shillings; hence the highest oath, that of a *twelf-hynde* man, was worth twelve hundred shillings.³ If the accused vassal had not the testimony of his *hlaforð* in his favour, he had either to bring forward a triple number of compurgators, or to undergo an ordeal of threefold rigour. In every case the accused had a larger number of compurgators to bring forward in his favour than the accuser, whose oath, from the number

¹ Laws of Hloth. and Ead. viii. ix. x.

² This, when equivalent to the *wergild* of the slain, was called a *werlâd*.—T.

³ Oaths, xiii. LL. Hen. I. lxiv. § 2.

of swearers, was denominated a rîm- (number) oath, or an ungecoren (unchosen) oath; from which number, however, a selection was made, either by the judges or by lot, and the oath of the persons thus selected was denominated a cyre (choice) oath. The number of compurgators is in all the Germanic laws variable, according to the magnitude of the injury, or of the value of the object in dispute, and sometimes appears to have been fixed very arbitrarily. The Anglo-Saxon is in this respect more precise. The compurgator swore a rîm-oath for as many shillings as he possessed hides of land (the judicial value of which was fixed at twenty shillings, or a pound), or was supposed by his wergild to possess. It seems not improbable that this shilling for the hide was the compensation or penalty of a compurgator convicted of a heedless oath.¹ Hence a fine of a hundred and twenty shillings was the alternative of an oath of a hundred and twenty hides;² and the king's thane, whose wergild was twelve hundred shillings, could swear only for sixty hides, or as many shillings. In like manner, the twy-hynde man, whose wergild was two hundred shillings, could be a compurgator for ten hides, to which his wergild was equivalent—but the real possession of which would have raised him to the rank of a twelf-hynde man—or for ten shillings, the value of which, in half a hide, he actually possessed. According to this computation it clearly appears how a twelf-hynde man's oath could be supplied by the oaths of six ceorls.

Among the legal methods of proof in use among the Anglo-Saxons must be mentioned that of God's judgment, or ordeal, and, perhaps, also that of single

¹ For examples of similar penalties, see *Lex Sal. tit. l.*

² *Laws of Ine, lii.*

combat. The account of Eadmund Ironsides' combat with Cnut and William's challenge by Harold show that the practice, though not general, existed.¹ The circumstance that in the Anglo-Saxon authorities extant no mention occurs of judicial combat, although an appropriate name (*eornest* ²) for it exists, is not to be regarded as a proof against the early prevalence in England of a custom universally adopted by those Germanic nations who were nearest akin to the Anglo-Saxons, as well as by the Scandinavians, and at a later period in use in England itself, where the priesthood successfully exerted themselves to suppress it. The other more strictly so-called God's judgments were rarely applied to, and in cases only of denial made by an accused party who had by previous crime forfeited his credibility, or of a slave who could not produce compurgators. These judgments seem to have had for object the confession of the criminal, some of them, as the consecrated morsel (*corsnæd*), and the cross-proof, being especially calculated to work on the imagination.

It has often been supposed that the origin of trial by jury is to be traced to the earliest periods of Anglo-Saxon history, some finding it in their courts of law, others in the compurgators. But among the Anglo-Saxons there was no tribunal composed of sworn individuals, whose province it was to decide on the credibility of accusations, and the value of the proof adduced in support of them. The compurgators ap-

¹ For examples among the continental Germans, see Grimm, D.R.A. p. 927 sq.

² The existence in German of the word '*ernst*,' signifying *single combat*, is in favour of its having borne the same signification among the earlier Anglo-Saxons. See Haltaus, s. v. '*Ernestkreiz*,' for *battle-place*, is used by Gottfried of Strasburg, *Tristan und Isolde*, v. 6754.

peared for the purpose of strengthening the allegation, but were not judges. It is in the latter only that we can perceive any resemblance to the modern jury, and they furnish us only with the most general features of sworn examiners from the neighbourhood of the accused ceorl; they were authorised accusers, witnesses and judges at the same time; unanimity in their verdict was not required. Two circumstances have especially so changed this, as well as other old legal institutions, that every attempt at comparison should be made with the utmost caution: viz. the entire change in the process of proof after the abolition of the God's judgments and compurgation; and, in a still greater degree, the introduction of a written law, framed on abstract principles, instead of that existing as matter of fact, and attested only by the judges. The period and manner of this transformation will be shown in the history of the first Norman kings.

The chief administration of justice was probably at first lodged with the king and the witenagemôt in common, but was gradually severed from the latter in proportion as the jurisdiction of the former was enlarged by new spheres of action. The king was the supreme judge in cases of offence committed by his warriors, in feudal contentions among his thanes, and in certain other cases reserved for his jurisdiction, the bôts or compensations for which accrued to him,¹ as violations of his peace on the public ways and in his dwellings, and when his subjects, on account of injustice, had occasion to appeal to him against their regular tribunals.² The activity of Ælfred and Eadgar in the

¹ Sec. Laws of Cnut, xii.-xiv.

² Laws of Eadgar, II. ii. Cnut, Sec. xvii. Cf. Hist. Rames. c. lxxxv.

regular administration of justice has been a frequent subject of praise. These kings journeyed to the royal vills and to monasteries, for the purpose of assembling the people of the shire, and composing their differences, as well as of exercising the privilege of moderating the royal fines and remitting capital and bodily punishments. Wherever the king was staying he could hold a court of justice, and the accused enjoyed his protection and peace not only in the sanctuary of the royal palace, but also within the verge of his temporary residence, which the old law, with more poetic than mathematical conception, defines to be "on every side from the burgh-gate where he is resident, three miles, three furlongs, three acres, nine feet, nine palms and nine barleycorns."¹ Itinerant judges did not exist under the Anglo-Saxon kings, as the royal jurisdiction was, for several reasons, seldom appealed to out of Wessex, and the exercise of many of the royal functions was in the latter times of the Anglo-Saxon government transferred to the great nobles and powerful ecclesiastics. The office of chancellor became, in consequence of the itinerancy of the royal court (*curia regis*), more and more important, particularly as it was not yet provided with appointed judges, but the most influential men of the province and of the attendants on the king guided his decision by their counsel. The great number of privileges and customs in the several component parts of the Anglo-Saxon realm must greatly have multiplied the occasions of appealing for judgment to the common head of all, while, at the same time, the

¹ Laws of Æthels. IV. v. The man at whose home (*hâm*) the king stopped to drink was, as early as the time of Æthelberht, protected by a twofold *bôt*. See his Laws, iii

increased power of the church was frequently exerted in procuring royal decisions against the laity.

It is not here the place to give a more extensive view of Anglo-Saxon law ; one remark may, however, be added, that not only in its most general features does it accord with the Germanic, but also in its minuter details, and in the legal language brought by the conquerors to Britain. The Anglo-Saxon is frequently not to be recognised in the corruptions of the Normans, and the German, like a half-effaced inscription, is often discoverable only in some old legal monuments ; yet it is possible that, on closer research, nothing of importance would be found in the laws of the emigrants, of which we could not point to an illustration or a counterpart in the legal documents of their continental brethren.

CHAPTER XXII.

Roman Institutions—Heathen Associations—Civic and other Gilds
—Ealdormen and Men of subordinate Rank—Property in Land
—Soca—Gild Protection, Aid, and Responsibility—Burghers—
Their Services—Frohubote—London—Its commercial Importance—Agriculture—Commerce—Gardens—Forests—Hunting—
Fishing—Mining—Trades—Commerce with Foreign Countries
—Mints—Coining—False Money—Different Values of Money.

IN no department of social life are so many traces of Roman institutions to be found in the former provinces of the empire as in the cities, though, perhaps, in no country fewer than in Britain, where Rome never wholly prevailed, never entirely expelled the old British institutions, and, in consequence of its remoteness, less powerfully exercised its moral influence. Whatever savoured of Rome was more utterly annihilated by the gradual cessation of Roman sway, than, as in other lands, it could have been through sudden invasion and conquest by the barbarians. The Saxons, whose language and religion so completely supplanted those of the conquered Britons, could have suffered only politically unimportant institutions to subsist. It must also be borne in mind that the Angles and Saxons of the fifth and sixth centuries could not have been such strangers to political and civic institutions as the Germans of Tacitus, an assumption justified by the similarity to be found in the oldest municipal denominations and institutions on both sides of the

German Ocean, while their common character exhibits a striking contrast to that of the Romanized countries.

The origin of the municipal system of the Saxons is to be traced up to the sacrificial gilds of heathenism.¹ These festivals were connected with the court and market days, and might, together with the discourse (*morgen-spæc*) following the feast, and through the criminal jurisdiction exercised by the priests, frequently assume a very serious character. The common refec-tion, which formed the cradle of many a political institution, received the consecration of religion as may be seen in the later healths or toasts of the Anglo-Saxons. The suppression of these devil's gilds (*deofol-gild*), as they were denominated in the Christian laws, was extremely difficult in the Germanic countries,² and it was found necessary to provide a substitute not only for the worship itself, but also for the institutions more or less arbitrarily connected with them. The convivial associations continued under their respective members, and while the hall of the rich thane was used for the feast and judicial assembly, a common building was in time constructed for the less wealthy freemen, the name of which (*domus convivii*) shows that every consultation was connected with a convivial feast. The peace of the ancient religion was preserved at the feast. All the members, provided their number did not exceed seven, were bound to pay the *wergild* of one slain among them in equal portions, unless they delivered up the perpetrator.³ The closer the

¹ See the highly instructive and interesting work of Dr. W. E. Wilda, *Gildenwesen im Mittelalter*.

² *Laws of Wihtræd*, xii. xiii. See *Laws of Cnut*, iv. *Capitul. de Part. Sax.* c. xxi. "*Si quis in honorem dæmonum comederit,*" etc.

³ *Lex Sal.* tit. xlv. 1, 2. Which passages have been erroneously

intimacy in which the several members lived together, the oftener occasions presented themselves for multiplying the objects of the association; consequently, in addition to religious purposes, we soon find societies for mutual assistance, if not for indemnity, in cases of shipwreck, fire, and other calamitous occurrences.¹ It was chiefly in the towns lying on the Flemish and neighbouring coasts that those corporations were formed, out of which the germ of the municipal constitution developed itself.² As, however, in the Frankish territory, these unions often seemed to threaten the unity of the state, they were frequently prohibited, and, above all, the customary oath exacted on admission to them was strictly forbidden. Among the Anglo-Saxons we find no such prohibitory measures against the gilds, probably because they had not lost their religious character, and were, therefore, under the influence of the clergy. Gilds strictly ecclesiastical were numerous, and had attained a high degree of development at a very early period.³ The duty incumbent on the gilds to preserve peace appears to have been so imperative, that, as we have seen, by the laws of Ælfred, in the case of homicide by one of the members, a part of the wergild was to be paid by the corporation. In London there were several peace-

understood to mean that seven constitute a 'convivium.' The principle, that seven found together are equally guilty, appears also to lie in the Anglo-Saxon legal adage, "Seven are called thieves" (Laws of Ine, xiii.), who, if taken together, were hanged together.

¹ Capit. Caroli Magni, a. 779, art. xiii.

² Capit. l. iv. c. 7 of temp. Lewis the Debonnair.

³ See Hickes, Dissert. Epist., and from him Turner, vol. iii. book vii. c. 10, and Wilda.

gilds (frith-gild) for the different ranks, which in the reign of Æthelstan formed a very remarkable association, for the better security of their property,¹ and which, like the Frankish unions of the same kind, were not bound together by oaths, but by the exchange of pledges. Besides the frith-gilds of London, we find in the Anglo-Saxon time a gild-hall at Dover, whence may be inferred the existence of a frith-gild in that town;² also three burgher-gilds (geferscipas) at Canterbury; and it may be assumed that many others existed in those early times, which are mentioned only at a somewhat later period, in charters of confirmation, and frequently, as of old foundation. In the commercial towns, these frith-gilds, or, at least, one of them, which numbered among its members merchants who traded beyond sea, might easily acquire the attributes and name of a commercial gild or hanse, of which description that at York, which had a hanse-house, is particularly conspicuous.³

At the head of the gilds, as of the cities, we usually find ealdormen, who governed them as far as their by-laws extended, and were not restricted by the king's gerefas, or the wic-, port-, or burgh-reeves,⁴ who exercised the privileges of jurisdiction, either by appointment or inheritance. We meet with such a wic-gerefa at London in the seventh,⁵ at Winchester in the

¹ Jud. Civit. Lundoniæ, cc. i. xxii.

² In the Anglo-Saxon glosses cited by Du Cange, *voce* Guild-halla, this word is explained by *frithgild*.

³ Besides the Hanses at Beverley and Dunwich, others at Montgomery and Hereford can be referred to as existing in the beginning of the reign of John. See Magnus Rotulus Pipæ de anno regni Regis Johannis tertio, p. 108.

⁴ We meet with the wykgereve, later wycvogt, in many towns of Lower Saxony, as Stade, Minden, etc.

⁵ Laws of Hloth, and Eadric, xvi.

ninth century, and soon afterwards at Bath.¹ The influence of the land-proprietors, on and near whose property the towns were built, and who, consequently, formed a separate aristocratic class, was long to be recognised. A considerable rent was often paid to the king, if not alienated by him to the lord of the manor.² This was probably the impost which is usually combined with the *scot* (usual also in the German towns) and known under the name of *hlot*.³ The aldermanries of Canterbury were connected with an alienable land-possession (*soca*⁴). In the towns occupied by the Danes the municipal government was in the hands of twelve lagemen, whose office was also connected with a *soc*, for which at Cambridge a knight's heriot was payable to the sheriff. These landowners we find united with others in the old gild of the thanes of the town just mentioned, for the sake not only of feasts and funerals, but for the conservation of the peace, and of the rights of the several members. The gild-brother who, without gross culpability, had committed a homicide, was aided in the payment of the *wergild*; if a member were slain, the whole fraternity avenged his death. If one gild-brother slew another, he was excluded from the society and friendship of all. To the fraternity of the united thanes the gild afforded corresponding protection. The subordinate rank of these thanes is to be inferred from the mention of their *hlaforð* conjointly with the gild-reeves. In other towns the burgher

¹ Sax. Chron. aa. 897, 906.

² See Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 192. Owing to the want of earlier documents, Domesday-Book is our principal source for the privileges of the Anglo-Saxon burghs.

³ *Hlot* seems to have signified *sors*, *lot*, a *plot of ground*; and afterwards, the rent for the same. See Grimm, *D. R. A.* p. 534.

⁴ Sommer's *Canterbury*, p. 97.

community possessed the privileges of *saca* and *soca*, for which extraordinary ship-services, and also military and hunting services or imposts were paid to the king. The burghers of Dover, for their sac and soc, supplied the king yearly with twenty ships, each having twenty-one men, during fifteen days. At Chester the twelve lagemen were chosen from among the vassals of the king, the bishop, and the earl. Inferior burghers (*meinburgenses*, *minores*, *minuti*), in contradistinction to the greater burghers, are mentioned at Derby, Norwich, and Tateshall. Cambridge was divided into ten wards; a similar partition also existed in London, which originally answered to the *teothungs* or *tien-manna* tale of the free inhabitants of the country. The manner in which the question of the heriot and imposts was determined for Anglo-Saxon towns is very obvious. This duty was estimated at five *hydths*, or equal to that of a corresponding number of lesser thanes, whose rights were based on the possession of five *hydths*. Thus Bridport and Exeter paid a war-service equal to five *hydths*; Dorchester and Hertford ten; Worcester fifteen; Bath and Oxford twenty; Chester fifty; and Shrewsbury one hundred.

On the right to those socs or franchises of which the burgh was composed, or the cession of the soc of the entire burgh (*carta allodii ad æternam hereditatem*), was founded, according to the legal notions of the Anglo-Saxons, the right of civic jurisdiction, connected with which, however, a civic community from Roman times may sometimes have retained this right by ancient prescription.

But an uninterrupted descent of essentially Roman municipal constitutions cannot be anywhere incon-

trovertibly shown. Defenders of this supposition have been disposed to perceive the 'Defensor' of the municipal constitution of the Romans, in the 'præco' or 'serjandus' of the burghs of the north of England and Scotland;¹ yet all the functions and duties of this official are merely those of the German *Gerichtscherge*, or *Frohnbote*, who was elected in like manner by the burghers, and whose testimony was equal to that of seven ordinary witnesses, while it was also his duty to receive prisoners into his house and to be present at sessions of land.

No municipal constitution in England is of equal importance to that of London, the chief municipal court of which city bore the name of the *Hūs-thing*, whence the modern 'Husting,' neither the origin nor name of which need be attributed to the Danes. The appellation of 'witan' does not seem to have been introduced into the municipal constitutions. At an early period we find one, and in the latter years of Eadward the Confessor two royal port-reeves at London. The aristocratic influence of the neighbouring landowners is not to be overlooked, for to them belonged the 'cnightengild,' which possessed land and separate jurisdiction both within and without the city.² Connected with this may have been the extensive privilege of hunting in Chiltern, Middlesex and Surrey.³

¹ Cathcart in Pref. to transl. of Savigny, v. i., who rests on the *Leges Burgorum*, ap. Houard, t. ii. He is misled by c. lxxv. where it is said, "Si præco vel serjandus falsitati consentiat . . . causa constitutionis villæ pessumdata vel minorandæ," where it merely alludes to a resolution of the burghers to be announced by the sergeant.

² See document in Rymer, i. p. 11, which testifies that it existed before the Conquest, viz. "tempore regis Eadwardi"

³ See charter of Henry I. in *Ancient Laws and Institutes*.

Many traces exist of a lively commerce in and among the several states of Britain. The inhabitant who entertained a chapman, who came across the march, longer than three nights, was under the obligation of bringing him to justice in the event of harm perpetrated by him, or of making indemnity for him.¹ A trader travelling with many people was obliged to announce himself to the king's gerefafa at the folc-gemôt, at the same time stating the number of persons with him, and engaging to present them to justice in case of need.² All purchases of chattels in London must be witnessed by two true men or by the king's wic-gerefafa.³ It was afterwards enacted that no bargain should be made outside the gate nor without the witness of the port-gerefafa, or of other credible men.⁴ King Æthelstan's laws are addressed to his gerefafas in all his burghs, the breach of whose peace (burh-bryce) was strictly forbidden by former laws.⁵ To the burghers themselves (burh-warū) was conceded the right of punishing for the breach of their peace,⁶ a privilege of which, as we have seen, the townsmen of Dover availed themselves against count Eustace. Under Eadgar, and subsequently, the assembly of the burghers (burh-gemôt) was holden thrice in the year.⁷ Among the regulations appertaining to the Anglo-Saxon burghs, that of king Eadgar is particularly worthy of notice, that in every large burgh, thirty-three men should be chosen as witnesses (gewitnesse) of contracts; in every smaller

¹ Laws of Hloth. and Eadric, xv. Cnut, Sec. xxviii.

² Laws of Ælfred, xxxiv.

³ Laws of Hloth. and Eadric, xvi. Ine, xxv.

⁴ Laws of Eadward I. Æthels. I. xii. xiii., III. ii., V. x. etc.

⁵ Laws of Ine, xlv. Eadm. ii. etc.

⁶ Laws of Æthelr. II. vi.

⁷ Laws of Eadgar II. v. Cnut, Sec. xviii.

burgh and hundred, twelve.¹ In later municipal constitutions we find this extraordinary property of credibility conferred on the parochial authorities and on members of the council.

Agriculture in England under the Anglo-Saxons did not again reach the degree at which it had arrived under the Roman dominion; though towards the close of the period of which we have been treating, the difference does not appear very considerable. Cities and commerce, even when by the latter more is received than exported, presuppose a soil not uncultivated, and native productions of the earth. The coast, especially towards the south, contained the greatest number of towns, and offers the most numerous proofs of agriculture; though East Anglia and the neighbouring marsh-districts must also be mentioned, the draining and embanking of which the Anglo-Saxons began, and thus made a memorable triumph of human industry practicable, by which marshes and swamps became transformed into a garden. Though many undertakings, usages, and precepts of the Romans may have continued to exist, we must, nevertheless, at the same time, bear in mind, that the German denominations for almost everything connected with agriculture and the breeding of cattle sufficiently prove, that the Angle and Saxon conquerors were not inexperienced in those arts.

The chief occupation of the Anglo-Saxons was the rearing of cattle, for which nature seems to have especially designed the country. Both the hilly west and the flat eastern parts of England are particularly fitted for this purpose, while the north-western eleva-

¹ Laws of Eadgar, Suppl. iv. v. According to Cnut, Sec. xxiv., it would appear that this regulation was no longer in force.

tion of the land secures to its slopes and plains the enlivening beams of the morning sun. The moist atmosphere of England, moreover, sheds a blessing over its surface in the rich fertility of its fields, the vivid green of which constitutes a never-perishing charm. Every husbandman (*gebûr*) received, on being settled on the land of his *hlaford*, seven sown acres on his yard of land, two oxen, a cow and six sheep. The cattle of the villeins was driven with that of the lords to graze on the common pasture. The milk, including that of the goat, was applied to various purposes besides that of making cheese. The fleece, which might not be shorn before midsummer,¹ supplied clothing for winter, and also a principal article of exportation, which the skilful artisans of the Netherlands and the Rhenish countries sent back in the form of woollen manufactures. Leather was used not only for shoes and breeches, but also for gloves, which even persons of the humblest class were in the habit of wearing.²

No branch of rural economy was more sedulously followed than the rearing of swine, which in all parts, where the old oak and beech woods were still undecayed, yielded to the swineherds a profitable occupation. Besides these swineherds who attended to the herds of the lord (*æhte-swan*), there was another class (*gafol-swan*), each of whom paid a yearly rent of ten swine and five pigs (*stiferh*), reserving all above this number for himself; but was bound to keep a horse for the service of the lord. It would seem probable that these men were descendants of the old British, since the term *gafol*, and many expressions in use in other

¹ Laws of Ine, lxi.

² *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum*, in *Anc. LL. and Inst.*
 “*Fulgarius debet habere calceamenta et chirothecas.*”

branches of husbandry are of British origin, while comparatively few have been derived from Latin. The rearing of bees was also a branch of industry. The condition of the bee-master (*beo-ceorl*) was nearly similar to that of the swineherd, and, like him, he sometimes possessed a free property. Many horses were bred; every man being obliged to have two to his plough: hence it is not surprising that the pirates of the north were so soon able to transform themselves into cavalry, after their landing on the coast. Horses appear also to have been an article of exportation from the law of *Æthelstan*, by which it is forbidden to send them beyond sea,¹ yet singularly enough we seldom hear of the use of horses in war.

Agriculture seems to have been adequate to the wants of the people, as we find no mention either of the export or import of grain; and of famine and its attendant, disease, less is recorded among the Anglo-Saxons than among other contemporary nations. William of Poitiers calls England a storehouse of Ceres, from its great abundance of corn² in the time of the last Eadward.³ The law enjoined, that of all the larger landed possessions, the greater part should be kept in cultivation.⁴ The several kinds of grain, viz. rye, barley, wheat and oats, were grown. The great cultivation of the last leads us to the supposition that, as in Scotland at the present day, it was made into cakes for food, whence its Anglo-Saxon name of '*ata*.' A considerable quantity of barley was brewed into beer or ale (*beor*, *ealu*, *ealath*), a word probably derived

¹ Laws of *Æthelstan*, I. xviii.

² Ed. Maseres, p. 107. "*Horreum Cereris dicenda videtur frumenti copia, sic ærarium Arabiæ auri copia.*"—T.

³ Guil. Pictav. 210.

⁴ Laws of Ine, lxiv.—lxvi.

from the Welsh,¹ and only found amongst northern nations, who may have been indebted to the Anglo-Saxons for their acquaintance with this beverage. That good beer was an object of importance in the estimation of the people is proved by one of the by-laws of Chester, which directs, that every man or woman brewing adulterated beer should forfeit four shillings, or be placed in the cucking stool (*cathedra stercoris*).² However skilled the Romanized Britons may have been in husbandry, it must, nevertheless, be observed, that all the agricultural implements in use among the Anglo-Saxons bear German names, as *egthe*, harrow (*old Ger. egida*); *plou*, *sulh*, plough (*old Ger. pfluoc*); *sicol*, sickle (*old Ger. sihhila*); *therscol* (from *therscan*, to thresh), flail (*old Ger. flegil*); *raca*, rake (*old Ger. rakysen*). The measures of land also betray their German origin, as *æcer*, acre (*old Ger. ahhar*, *Lat. ager*); *rod*, rood (O.-Sax. *ruodda*); *dægmete*³ (*Ger. demat*), which in Cheshire is equal to half an acre, as in East and North Friesland; *reep*, *ferling*, *ferding*,⁴ *sulung* (in Kent) from *sulh*, plough, etc.

Among the parts in which agriculture formed a principal branch of industry, Ely, Norfolk and Suffolk are particularly conspicuous, which, through the exertions of the clergy and other inhabitants, were at an early period drained and converted into productive marshlands.

At the close of this period, frequent mention of gardens occurs among the Anglo-Saxons, under the name of *wyrtgeard*, *ortgeard*, whence the modern

¹ Laws of Ine, lxx. "Wilisc ealath."

² Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 203.

³ As much as could be mowed in a day. See also Falk, *Rechtsgesch.* Th. ii.

⁴ In Hants and Somersetshire. See *Domesday*.

orchard. These must be distinguished from the vineyards so frequently noticed, and which in Gloucestershire and other southern counties we find attached to almost every monastic establishment. Smithfield, within the circuit of the city of London, was formerly covered with vineyards. Holborne also had a vineyard. From the grapes of these vines, the introduction of which has been ascribed to the emperor Probus (A.D. 280¹), a wine was pressed, particularly in the fruitful county of Gloucester, which was not thought too rough and acid for consumption in those days.² We have information of the quantity of wine to be rendered yearly in Essex by the tenant to the lord. It seems needless, in explanation of this extensive cultivation of the vine in England, to attribute it to a greater mildness of climate at that period, or to a change in the soil caused by constant tillage. It may suffice, perhaps, to call to mind, that here, as in other northern countries, among others the Mark of Brandenburg, where the vine, it is said, formerly flourished not very long ago, much rougher and sourer wines were drunk than those now in use, either mingled with sweet ingredients, or made into various preparations.

England abounded in forests which, through the shelter they afforded to robbers, were in many parts a source of peril both to travellers and to the neighbouring inhabitants. Subsequently to the reign of the Confessor, the abbot of St. Albans gave a mansus to Thurnoth, under the obligation of clearing the forest

¹ Vopiscus, *Vita Probi*, and Ellis, *Introd.* i. p. 116 sq. for Smithfield, see document in Rymer, t. i. p. 17.

² Malmesb. *de Pont.* lib. iv. "Vallis Glocestrensis . . . regio plusquam aliæ Angliæ provinciæ vinearum frequentia densior, proventu uberior, sæpore jucundior."

there of wild beasts and robbers, and of making indemnity for any robbery there committed. For the sake of greater security, he also had that part of the forest felled which was adjacent to the Watling Street.¹ The felling and burning of trees were punishable at an early period.² Much of the value of the forests consisted in the oak and beech mast, which supplied food to the numerous herds of swine reared in those times.³ The worth of a tree was reckoned according to the number of swine that could stand under it.⁴ Another great attraction to the forests was the numerous beasts of the chase to which they afforded shelter. The noble craft of hunting was the chief recreation of the highest personages, both temporal and ecclesiastical. Ælfred was distinguished, even in his early youth, for his skill and boldness in the chase; and many stories are yet extant of adventures, stratagems and negligence, to which their passion for this recreation had led other princes. Even Eadward the Confessor himself appears to have spent a great part of his time between masses and hunting. The Anglo-Saxons made a distinction between the higher and lower chase; the former was expressly for the king, or those on whom he had bestowed the privilege of sharing in it; the latter only was allowed to the proprietors of the land. Besides the ecclesiastical and secular laws of Cnut, we have his "*Constitutiones de Foresta*," composed, as the preamble informs us, for the benefit of the churches of England.⁵ By this docu-

¹ *Historia Abbatum S. Albani*.

² *Laws of Ine*, xliii. xliv. Ælfred, xii.

³ *Laws of Ine*, xlix.

⁴ *Laws of Ine*, xliv.

⁵ Printed in Spelman's *Glossarium*, and in *Anc. LL. and Inst.* Cf. the document '*Rectitudines Sing. Person.*' and Ellis, i. p. 103.

ment four thanes were appointed in every province, for the administration of justice in all matters connected with the forests, under whom were four inferior thanes (*lesthegenes*), to whom was committed the immediate care of the vert and venison; and under each of these were two men, whose duty it was to keep watch by night, and perform other servile offices. For their services, each of these ranks received respectively an annual remuneration of two hundred shillings, sixty shillings, and fifteen shillings of silver, besides horses and arms. All crimes and delinquencies, committed by individuals of the two subordinate classes, were to be tried and punished by the superior thanes, while these latter were amenable to the king only. Besides the hart, bisons, hares and rabbits were enclosed, which enclosing (*deorhege*), as well as the stalling of the beasts of venery (*stabilitio, stabilitas*¹), was one of the onerous services imposed on the villeins and burghers. Every one was allowed to shoot wolves and foxes, when found without the enclosure, and it may excite our wonder, how the latter animal, for ages the object of unremitted persecution and sport to the gentry of England, has escaped total annihilation. The British dogs, which had attracted the attention of the Romans, were also cherished by the Anglo-Saxons, and every two villeins were under the obligation of maintaining one of these animals.²

Fishing, during the whole middle ages, was an occupation of considerable importance, in consequence of the great number of fast-days enjoined by the church. The capture of the largest species was pursued by

¹ *Rectitudines Sing. Person.*

² The heador (*heah-deor*) hund, or molossus, was, as its name implies, used for chasing the larger animals.—T.

the Anglo-Saxons as far as Iceland: the eastern parts produced a vast abundance of eels. Not less than seven thousand were paid from thence as rent to the canons of St. John of Beverley.¹ Herrings then as now took their course along the eastern coast through the channel, where Sandwich yielded forty thousand annually for the refectory of the monks of Christ Church, Canterbury. The church of St. Peter at Winchester received from the villeins on its manor at Lewes thirty-eight thousand five hundred; from the burgesses of which town the lord also received sixteen thousand. The manor of Beccles in Suffolk, in the time of the Confessor, yielded thirty thousand to St. Edmundsbury abbey, and in the reign of William the Conqueror, sixty thousand. Salmon, as well as weirs and other measures for their conservation and capture, are likewise frequently mentioned; though this fish does not appear to have existed in great abundance, excepting at Eaton in Cheshire, where, in the time of the Conqueror, a thousand were annually yielded to the earl. Of rights of fishery, for which yearly sums were paid, many traces are extant.

On casting a glance at the state of mining in England under the Anglo-Saxons, we at once perceive how the Britons were sunk, even in the provinces which remained to them longest, as the mere obtaining of the metal, the great link of connection between Britain and the continent, was no longer followed; nor after the conquest of Cornwall by Æthelstan, is mention anywhere made of tin. Iron, on the contrary, was dug up and manufactured in some abundance in the West Saxon counties of Gloucester, Hereford and Somerset. Lead was found chiefly in Derbyshire, and in sheets

¹ Domesday, t. i. p. 304.

was used to cover the roofs of the larger buildings. William of Poitiers, a well-informed man, maintains that Britain possessed much more noble metal than France, and somewhat surprises us by stating, that from its abundance of gold it deserved to be called the treasury of Arabia.¹

Salt-works were very numerous in some counties, particularly in those lying on the coast. In Sussex, at the time of the conquest, there were of these no less than three hundred and eighty-five, which were much more productive than the salt-pans in the interior of the country; though those of the *wiches* of Cheshire were very considerable. Of these latter, respecting which Domesday gives very circumstantial details, the produce appears for the most part to have been sent into Wales.²

Civic trades in general do not appear to have been carried on to any great extent, and only to have been calculated for the wants of the neighbourhood. Cloth-weavers seem to have been established at Stamford,³ and the madder, which was imported from St. Denys, must have been used for dyeing red.

The embroidery and other works in gold of the Anglo-Saxons, both male and female (who herein strikingly prove their kinship to the Angles of the continent⁴), excited the admiration even of the Greeks and Saracens. Very elegant workmanship has been preserved of the time of Ælfred. Instruction in works of gold (*aurifrisium*) was remunerated by the donation of half a hide of land; and, exclusively for the use of the king and

¹ See p. 440, note *. * Domesday, t. i. fol. 268. Ellis, i. p. 132.

² Domesday, i. 336 b., where they are called 'panifici,' for which we should, no doubt, read 'paunifici.'

⁴ Leges Anglorum, tit. iv. art. 20, tit. vi. art. 6.

queen, a peculiar gold embroidery was devised. Even the Germans, so well skilled in those arts, came to England to learn from the Anglo-Saxons; and foreign merchants brought the most costly works of this kind to England, which there found both appreciation and purchasers.¹

We have already noticed traces of Anglo-Saxon commerce in France, at Rouen, at the fair of St. Denys, in Flanders and in the North. As early as the beginning of the eighth century, we meet with an Anglo-Saxon merchant sojourning at Marseilles, named Bolto.² Under Charles the Great, we find the French complaining that the Anglo-Saxons exported garments (probably of wool) of a smaller size than formerly.³ From Bristol a considerable traffic was carried on to Ireland, which was perverted into a trade in slaves.⁴ The whale-fishery brought both Anglo-Saxons and Danes to Iceland, where the inheritance to the property of those Anglo-Saxons who died there was secured to their relations, if father, son or brother had been there previously, and had been known there.⁵ Whithersoever the foot of a bold, enthusiastic missionary had advanced, wherever ecclesiastics had established an intercourse, thither, at all times, have merchants, for reciprocal benefit, soon followed. Offa's commercial treaty with France, Cnut's solicitude for the merchants travelling to Italy, may

¹ Guil. Pictav. p. 211. "*Anglicæ nationis fœminæ multum acus et auri textura; egregie viri in omni valent artificio. Ad hoc, incolere apud eos Germani solebant, talium artium scienti-simi,*" etc. Leo Mar-icanus, Chron. Casinens. lib. ii. c. 33, informs us that the "*opus Anglicum*" was famous even in Italy.

² His son, bishop Andegar, died a. 790. See Petav. Annal.

³ Epist. Caroli ad Offam, ap. Wilkins, Concil. i. p. 153.

⁴ Vita S. Wulstani, ap. Wharton, Angl. Sac. t. ii.

⁵ Grágás, Arfathattr, tit. vi. xviii.

here likewise be called to remembrance. A commercial intercourse with Rome by sea has by some been supposed, but of this there is no proof.¹

The ship of the merchant, even when of a hostile country, found peace in the Anglo-Saxon ports, unless it had been driven in.² London at all times was a considerable emporium, in which many foreigners were assembled, and where, besides French, Normans and Flemings, whom we find engaged in traffic at Billingsgate, in the time of Æthelred the Second, we recognise also, in the "men of the emperor," the merchants of Thiel,³ Cologne,⁴ Bremen⁵ and the other Hanse Towns, who, even at that early period, had laid the foundation of their later establishments in London, so important for the commerce of England and Germany. Merchants from Sluys, Liège and Nivelles travelled over the country, after having paid the duty on their wares.⁶ The Germans, though otherwise favoured, were, like other foreigners, compelled to expose their merchandise

¹ A proof is supposed to be found in Bede, Hist. Abbat. Wirem. a. 667, where it is said of Benedict Biscop, "sacratam civitatem (Romam) repedare statuit. Nec post longum, adveniente nave mercatoria, desiderio satisfecit." From this passage it can at the utmost only be inferred that a Roman ship came to England; but it is far more probable that a ship conveyed the Northumbrian pilgrim to some part of the continent, who from thence pursued his journey by land.

² Laws of Æthelr. II. ii.

³ English at Thiel on the Waal, and Thielers in England, for commercial purposes, are mentioned in the account of the contest for the free navigation of the Rhine in 1018. See Alpertus, De Diversit. Temp. lib. ii. c. 21. ap. Eccard, Scriptt. Med. Ævi.

⁴ I mention Cologne on the ground of probability only; the proof is wanting both for the tenth and eleventh centuries.

⁵ For the middle of the eleventh century a proof exists in the Vita S. Bernwardi, ap. Leibnitz, Scriptt. Rer. Brunsv. t. i. p. 466.

⁶ Laws of Æthelr. IV, De Institutis Lundonie, ii.

for sale on board their ships, in exchange for which they took wool, the great staple commodity of England. The delivery of the usual tolls in kind on pepper, gloves, cloths, at Christmas and Easter, times unfavourable to navigation, leads to the supposition that their ships had a secure station on the shore, which supplied the place of a depot, till they succeeded in acquiring their own place for the landing and sale of their merchandise on the bank of the river.¹ Both at London and York we find Frisian merchants as early as the eighth century.² The latter city was distinguished for its commerce also at a later period, particularly with the Germans.³ Icelanders also came not unfrequently to the British islands.⁴ At Chester we notice a trade with the North in furs.⁵ Vessels from the north of Europe had for ages brought fish, skins, and valuable furs, an object of most costly luxury in the middle ages.⁶ The markets were numerous, and produced to the king no inconsiderable revenue.

Mints were established in several of the cities and towns of the kingdom, in which we find the number of privileged moneyers strictly limited by the law.⁷ By a later enactment the number of moneyers in every

¹ Cf. *Urkundliche Geschichte der Deutschen Hanse*, Th. i.

² Bede, *Hist. lib. iv. c. 22.* *Altfridi Vita S. Ludgeri*, c. xi. in *Monum. Ger. Hist. t. i.*

³ *Malmesb. de Pont. lib. iii. Procem.* "Eboracum, urbs ampla, . . . a duabus partibus Huse fluminis ædificata, includit in medio sinus sui naves a Germania et Hibernia venientes."

⁴ Grágás, *Vigslodi*, tit. ci. *Arfathattr*, tit. xiii.

⁵ *Domesday*

⁶ *Egil's Saga*, cc. xviii. lxxv., an authority which, on account of its late composition, affords, it is true, no proof for the year 878, but which, with other credible and in part concordant accounts, we may be allowed to cite.

⁷ *Laws of Æthelst. I. xiv.*

large port was restricted to three, in every other to one only,¹ so that if a merchant brought base or light money, he must declare whence he received it, on peril of his wer, or even of his life; or prove that he was ignorant of its baseness or deficiency, and exchange it with the appointed moneyers for good and heavy coin.² That these moneyers were, for that period, no unskilful artists, is apparent from the coins still preserved, the impresses on which present to our view the images of the earliest kings of the Angles and the Saxons. Many coiners of base money carried on their nefarious trade in the recesses of the forests, a crime strictly forbidden by the laws and punishable by death.³

In Wessex and Mercia different monetary calculations prevailed. In the former, the pound (pund) consisted of forty-eight shillings, the shilling (scilling) of five pence,⁴ and the penny (pening, penig) of four sceats. Besides these, there were the mancus or marc, of thirty pennies, and the Danish ora of sixteen pennies. In Mercia the pound contained sixty shillings of four pence each. Another money, the thrymsa, was equal to three pence Mercian. The denomination of *sterling* does not occur among the Anglo-Saxons, though it appears so soon after the Conquest,⁵ that we may,

¹ Institt. Lund. ix.

² Institt. Lund. vii. "ut cambiat ab institutis monetariis purum et recte appendens."

³ Laws of Æthelr. III. xvi., IV. v.

⁴ Dr. Lappenberg considers the Anglo-Saxon shilling to have contained four pennies only.—T.

⁵ Charter of donation of William the Conqueror to the monastery of St. Evroul (Monasterium Uticen e, in the diocese of Lisieux), a. 1081. ap. Order. Vital. p. 602. Monast. Angl. vi. P. 2, p. 1078. Orleric was a monk of this monastery. He mentions "*libras sterilensium*," and "*libras sterilensis monete*," a. 1082. p. 580.

perhaps, safely assume that the Germanic term was known in England at an earlier period. Until further research should make it probable that the designations "shilling" and "sceat" were introduced into England at a later period, we may assume that they were brought to Britain by the Saxons, whose country was not a stranger to the commercial movement of the times. The Mercian shilling, or *thrymsa*,¹ likewise betrays its German origin, and it is not impossible that in the Latinised form of "*Mancus*," we have merely a variation of the Saxon word "*Manghere*," means of barter, from "*Manghian*," to exchange. This term, although sometimes used to denominate a gold coin, usually indicates a silver piece of thirty penings. The oras of sixteen, and those later of twenty penings, are known to the other northern nations, whilst the *ferding* (or *veerding*) was used in Lower Saxony. A copper coin in the north of England bore the name of *sticce*. The *denarii albi* of the Anglo-Saxon documents are the whit-pennings of Lower Saxony. The *mære peningas*, mentioned in the laws of Ælfred, are the *meri denarii* of the Capitularies.

The preceding meagre outlines will, we believe, be found to embrace all the most essential facts that can be given with historical truth of the social condition of the Anglo-Saxons. In these peoples we recognise a branch of the great primitive Germanic stock, which longer than any other out of Germany preserved its nationality and independence. Most of the Germanic states, after the adoption of Christianity, were crushed by the overwhelming weight of the Romish culture, which had been forced upon them with the new faith.

¹ The Continental Saxons had one shilling of two *thrymsas*, and another of three. *Lex Saxonum*, tit. 19.

The Western Goths and Franks were only imperfectly and partially spared from a similar fate through their early and thorough Romanization. The Saxons, in their colonization of the Wendish lands, showed the same devoted tenacity in maintaining and diffusing their hereditary customs and faith, and in upholding their principles of freedom and action, and they everywhere destroyed the nationality of the Wends, as their forefathers in earlier times had destroyed that of the Britons. The Saxons must, however, have brought with them to Britain a greater treasure in language and in political and legal institutions and ideas, and a more advanced mental and civic development than the ordinarily accepted view would lead us to infer. The adoption of Christianity, which followed only long after the firm establishment of the Saxon power and influence, was not due to political considerations, but was rather a response to the religious needs of the highest and best among the people, and its influence did not, therefore, prove directly detrimental to the Germanism of the newly converted Anglo-Saxon island. Even the crushed church of the British, which only raised its voice to utter a warning, and give expression to its obstinate defence of its own interpretation of a few doubtful and almost obsolete traditions—and its learning scarcely went beyond this—found that its utmost efforts only sufficed to guard Saxon nationality, and not its own, from the influence of Roman culture.

Yet Germanism was threatened by many grave perils in England, for, as we have already seen, the glory of the old royal races had departed with the ancient faith; and if Christianity lent support to the exercise of the supreme power in its outward manifestations, it deprived it of the sacred origin on which

its inner strength had been based. Yet, in this respect, all the noble Anglo-Saxon families shared one and the same fate. The rank and authority of the old chieftains, as well as those of the more recent nobles, whose pretensions rested on military service, or investiture, had been artificially developed in accordance with the principles on which nobility by birth had been based in the ancient homes of the Saxons; and we have seen with what minute care the political calculation of the old Anglo-Saxon legal system was made to apply to the smallest particulars of social life. Under the changed order of things, the men, who had once bravely defended their old joint heritage, and boldly fought to secure the new possession, lost their strength when deprived of the charge of defending their private property, and sank into inactivity and sensuality in the enervating enjoyment of peace, and under the assumed protection of their legally secured rights.

Britons and Scots were indeed subdued, but in the surrounding sea England had a treacherous neighbour, more formidable at that early state of knowledge than any that could threaten her. Too unruly to be made subservient to friendly intercourse, it favoured an enemy by presenting ever new and unguarded points of access to the country, while the warlike spirit of the Saxons—long unused to the dangers of the sea and the wielding of arms—grew more and more enfeebled under the influence of domestic and festive social life. The lands in which lay the king's old West-Saxon domains did indeed long and fiercely repel the approach of the Danish hordes, but in other provinces the Anglian and Saxon nobles too often gave service and homage to the Dane. The settlement of Danish thanes in England had the effect of more and more thoroughly

severing the now loosened bonds that had once held together the Anglo-Saxon nobles, and the greater number were content, when assured of the continued possession of their property, *wer*, and other privileges, to tender their oaths of allegiance to a king who spoke a tongue foreign to their own.

None but an alien could have raised, or utterly repressed, the humbled nobles, nor could any other ruler have coped successfully with those bonds of relationship, alliance, and association amongst the Anglo-Saxons, which hindered the centralization of the national strength; while they afforded the strong and valiant additional means of opposition to authority, and took from the weak the necessity of self-reliance. But even Cnut's glorious reign, with the prosperity and honour that had restored to the nation its confidence and integrity, had not been able to raise the nobles of the kingdom. In the shadowy kingship of Eadward and in the influence of his major domo, Godwine, we have a melancholy travesty of the well-known scenes enacted in the Frankish history, without, however, evoking another Charles the Great.

The simple missionary of the olden time had been followed by dignified prelates and worthy "mass-thanes," but on the decay of the warlike nobles, the church was represented by an order of intriguing clergy, who scrupled not to secure the destruction of their opponents by giving their allegiance to a Roman lord and master. Under such conditions it did indeed seem that Germanism had ceased to exist in Britain, when the body of the last Anglo-Saxon king was carried, with scant honours, to its final resting-place. That it was not so, the most superficial knowledge of the England of to-day will suffice to prove, while the

fuller elucidation of the subject will undoubtedly rank among the most attractive tasks of future historical inquiry. Yet it must not be overlooked that the scattered facts, already given in the preceding pages, combine to show us that the kernel of Saxonism in Britain had not been affected by the deterioration of the nobility. Although the once free German could no longer stand forth in complete independence, since a part of his personal freedom had been relinquished in consideration of the protection of property secured to him under certain restrictions, these conditions were, however, of so easy a nature that they did not invalidate his right to the rank of a freeman.¹ Britons and Danes had, indeed, been fused into the German population; but they had appropriated to themselves the nationality of the Anglo-Saxons. From the ranks of the old *ceorl* sprang the population which has given a changed and improved form to a great part of England, cultivated its soil with skill and success, covered it with innumerable villages and populous cities; while it laid the foundations of an active intercourse with other nations, and created a language and literature, whose wealth and importance, even the few remains that have come down to us, justify us in estimating at a very high value. The most devoted adhesion to their nationality has always been manifested by this numerous section of the population, which even in the Norman conquest of England, reaped a new victory for German nationality.

¹ The *liberi homines* of Domesday are for the most part *ceorls*.



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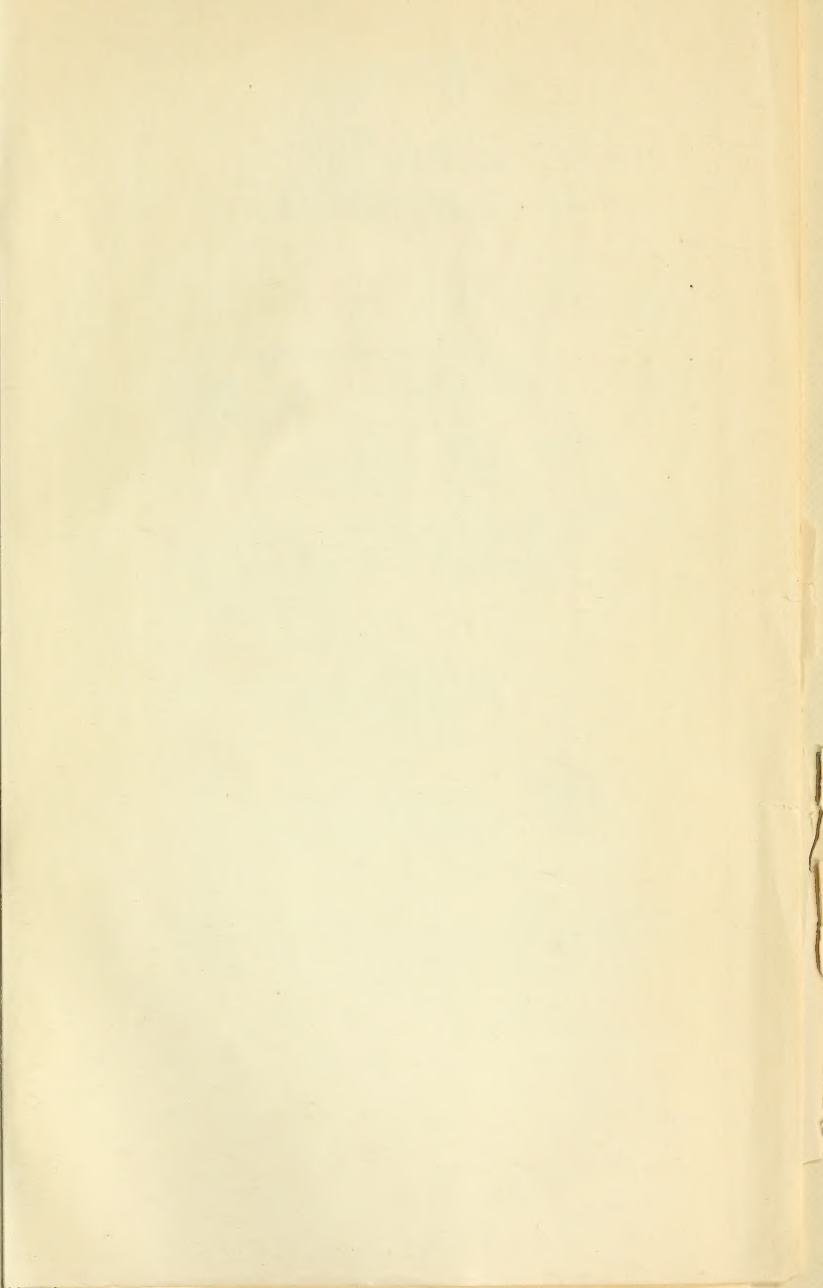
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